

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

**BEYOND 'ADMINISTRATION' AND 'MANAGEMENT':
RECONSTRUCTING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN UK
HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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ABSTRACT

As higher education institutions, and their workforces, have expanded and diversified to meet the demands of contemporary environments, boundaries are being breached between functional areas, between professional and academic domains, and between internal and external constituencies. At the same time, broadly based, extended projects such as student support, management development and enterprise partnership have emerged, requiring contributions from a range of professional staff. As a result, the terms ‘administration’ and ‘management’ fall short in providing comprehensive understandings of the identities of increasing numbers of staff.

This study considers the implications of these changes by identifying three categories of professional, with associated spaces, knowledges, relationships and legitimacies. On the one hand, *bounded professionals* locate themselves firmly within organisational and functional boundaries, and are characterised by their concern for continuity and the safeguarding of standards and procedures. On the other hand, *cross-boundary professionals* actively use their understanding of institutional boundaries to develop superordinate identities across one or more domain of activity, performing interpretive functions, and also becoming actors in institutional decision-making. By contrast, *unbounded professionals*, having a disregard for boundaries, adopt a more open-ended and exploratory approach to their broadly based projects, expanding the space available for institutional activity. Thus, *cross-boundary professionals* and *unbounded professionals*, in their own way, develop new forms of institutional knowledge and relationships, the former focusing on institutional capacity building, and the latter on institutional development for the future.

Not only have professional staff become more active in constructing their identities but, as they work across and beyond boundaries, they are obliged to re-negotiate the sources of their legitimacy. In turn, it may be that those institutions that are able to give recognition to more extended ways of working will be more likely to maximise the contribution of professional staff, and to achieve an effective accommodation with their current and future environments.

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INTRODUCTION

“We should develop a fuller understanding of ... managerial professionals’ daily lives and everyday practices – ‘thick descriptions’ of their work... we should explore the social relations among these non-faculty professionals, and between them and faculty. The professional and political terrain of colleges and universities is far more complex than our current categories allow for. Such terrain has direct implications for how we can better organize our work and collective efforts” (Rhoades, 1998: 143).

From where I stand

This study developed from observations during my own career in four UK universities that the terms ‘administrator’ and ‘manager’ no longer did justice to the professional identities of a diversifying group of professional staff. Whereas administration and management were seen traditionally as something ‘done’ by one group of people to another, professional staff had become involved in constructing new forms of knowledge and relationships that were integral to institutional survival in contemporary higher education systems and markets. Associated with these changes, the concept of an administrative service to academic staff (Sloman, 1964; Shattock, 1970; Lockwood, 1986; Barnett, 1993) has been re-oriented towards client or customer service (for instance, to students and funders and regional partners). By internalising academic cultures and aspirations, and relating these to their own areas of expertise, professional staff were linking academic purposes with both internal constituencies and external partners, undertaking work that might be more

appropriately described as institutional research and development. They were, therefore, adding value to their institutions in ways that were not being clearly acknowledged or articulated.

These considerations placed in a new light long-standing debates, for instance in the national Association of University Administrators (AUA), about whether professional staff not categorised as academic might most appropriately be described as ‘administrators’ or ‘managers’. It seemed to me that this was not the critical discussion to be having, in that neither of these descriptors, even when qualified by terms such as ‘generalist’ or ‘specialist’, fully reflected the capacities of these staff. Likewise, commentaries about their collective professionalisation did not take account of ways in which individuals were building credibility locally, often on an *ad personam* basis, by progressing institutional understandings about what might and might not work in different contexts. Furthermore, such developments were raising issues about ways in which these emerging knowledges and relationships might be legitimised and validated in the university.

Furthermore, the terms ‘administration’ and ‘management’ are both contested in the wider literature, the former carrying implications of unwanted bureaucracy associated with, for instance, the requirements of government audit, and the latter for its association with the changing socio-economic environment of higher education. As institutions appointed professional staff in areas such as enterprise and partnership, quality and marketing, these staff have become linked with such external developments, and may even be seen as responsible for them. On the other hand, such

individuals may also be performing interpretive functions for their institutions as the latter respond to external change, in ways that have not been fully recognised.

Whilst making reference to a wide-ranging literature on the implications of more market-oriented approaches to the management of institutions, and the appropriateness of this in relation to autonomous professionals such as academic staff, the focus of this study is, nevertheless, on the identities of professional staff. My aim has been to make a contribution to understandings of these staff, and to provide a platform for possible future work on the career paths and development opportunities available to them.

Defining the object of research

In the early stages of the research, the decision was taken to confine the interviews associated with the main part of the study to individuals with a professional administrative or management portfolio. This was in order to focus on this group of staff, who were under-researched, and because other studies exist on academic identities and the involvement of academic staff in management roles (for instance Henkel, 2000, 2005, 2007; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Barnett, 2005; Smith, Adams and Mount, 2007). Nor were other categories of professional staff, such as those involved in teaching and learning, or library and information services, included.

There is sometimes confusion about how professional staff relate to the 'management' of the university, as represented by, for instance, senior management teams and decision-making committees that contain both academic and professional

managers. Academic managers would include, for instance, pro-vice-chancellors, deans, and heads of department, and professional managers would include heads of administration, directors of functional areas such as finance and human resources, and their staffs. In order to develop a more sustained view of professional staff *per se*, the study draws a distinction between them and academic managers, using the narratives of respondents to achieve a more nuanced version of professional staff identities than exists in the literature.

There is also a distinction to be drawn between academic staff whose prime responsibilities are teaching and research (referred to in the text as 'mainstream' academic staff), and those with management responsibilities, the latter defined in the study as academic managers. While this second group of individuals may be regarded by their academic colleagues as 'managers', for the purpose of the study they are assumed to have an academic identity. Where the term 'academic staff' is used, this refers to academic managers *and* mainstream academic staff, although the latter may be responsible for managing, for instance, research projects or teaching programmes within their school or department. However, none of these boundaries are necessarily clear-cut. Two respondents in the study, for instance, had had teaching and research experience in colleges of further and higher education, although they were undertaking professional rather than academic roles in their current posts.

Although the three case institutions, with very different academic profiles, were selected for the purposes of drawing respondents from as broad a range of institutions as possible, it was not an intention to provide a critique of the organisation and

management of the institutions themselves. The small sample of twenty-four respondents would, in any case, preclude this. Nevertheless, in order to provide as comprehensive a picture as possible of the professional identities of staff, general observations have been made about the possible relationship between individuals and the organisational structures in which they work.

Because of the difficulties around the terms ‘administrator’ and ‘manager’, and in order to distinguish the subjects of the study from academic managers, the term ‘professional staff’ will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the categories of professional staff defined in the following section. It is not, however, intended to imply that other categories of staff, including academic staff, are not also professionals in their own right.

The lack of a vocabulary with which to provide a more precise perspective on administrators and managers is illustrated by the range of terms currently in circulation. These include ‘non-academic staff’, ‘academic-related staff’, ‘professional staff’ and ‘support staff’, all of which are used in different official classifications (for instance Dearing, 1997; Bett, 1999; HESDA, 2002; HESA, 2005). For the purpose of the study, the “managers and administrators” category in a report by the Higher Education Staff Development Association (HESDA) are used to define the target group (HESDA, 2002). This represents 38,000 staff or about 8% of the workforce, and corresponds to an estimate of 7-9% calculated from figures in the Bett Report (1999), and an estimate of 7.4% calculated from the 2003/4 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) statistics (HESA, 2005). Details of the calculations made

from these reports to arrive at a definition of the target group are given in Appendices 1-4.

These definitions refer to an increasingly heterogeneous patchwork of professionals, who are represented by a range of specialist bodies, as well as the more broadly based Association of University Administrators (AUA). They include, for instance:

- Academic administrators (clustered around regulatory and secretariat functions).
- Accredited professionals, such as directors of human resources, finance, estates and facilities.
- People in niche areas in higher education, such as quality and widening participation.
- People who build a portfolio as project managers, either of one-off projects such as applications for infrastructure funding and the delivery of new facilities, or in relation to larger projects stretching across, for instance, student services or enterprise activity.
- A growing number of staff who have academic credentials paralleling those of their academic colleagues (for instance, doctoral qualifications and/or teaching/management experience in the college or further education sectors), some of whom might see themselves moving into academic management roles, for instance, as a pro-vice-chancellor for administration, quality, or staffing.

What began as a relatively cohesive cadre of professional administrators in the pre-1992 sector, therefore, has become a coalescence of overlapping groupings. On the one hand, institutions increasingly require specialists to meet the demands of regulatory and market-oriented environments in areas such as financial audit and tax, employment legislation, marketing and public relations. On the other hand, a significant number of staff not having mainstream academic posts are undertaking what might be termed 'quasi-academic' roles, such as welcome talks to new students, outreach sessions with secondary school pupils, or interviewing candidates for admission on remote sites. In this they work side-by-side with other staff, including academic managers, mainstream academic staff, teaching and learning professionals, and information and library staff.

Moreover, the picture is not a static one, and creates a moving target for the study.

For example:

- Professionals who are able to apply their expertise to a range of issues and problems no longer confine themselves to specialist silos, but collaborate in multi-functional teams and cross into adjacent areas. On a day-to-day basis, therefore, individuals may relate more to tasks and teams than to formal organisational structures and hierarchies.
- The unification of the pre- and post-1992 sectors has increased traffic between the two sectors, fostering a cross-fertilisation of working practices and cultures, and creating new opportunities for professional staff, such as moves into pro-vice-chancellor roles associated with administration or human resources.

- An influx of staff from outside higher education, bringing expertise in areas such as marketing and regional partnership, has contributed to the professional mix, and made movements in and out of the system more common than before 1992.
- Professional managers are increasingly likely to spend time working with colleagues outside the university. For instance, data managers work with technical and design staff from information system providers; business enterprise staff work with partners in regional development agencies and innovation centres; and student support staff work with colleagues on offshore campuses.

These dynamics arise partly from the development of broadly based, extended projects across the university, which are no longer containable within firm boundaries, creating new functional portfolios (Whitchurch, 2006a). These projects, such as student support and welfare, business partnership, and human resource development, require professionals capable of understanding the way that different elements impact on the project as a whole. For instance, the student project now encompasses contiguous activities such as marketing and recruitment, widening participation, student funding, welfare and disability, careers advice and alumni relations. Human resources, as well as encompassing all the legislative requirements associated with employing staff, may also incorporate staff development, equality and diversity, and work-life issues. These extended projects are capable not only of merging and coalescing, but also of splitting and forming new fields of activity. Professional staff in these kinds of areas are, therefore, increasingly mobile,

physically and intellectually. The space created by such project working incorporates “in between” space as described by Boud (2006), although it is unlikely to be represented in formal organisation charts.

These trends reflect wider movements in the workplace, whereby employers seek “employees with good interpersonal skills who are able to engage in ‘rule-making’ rather than ‘rule-following’ behaviour”, and are “innovative and creative” rather than “bureaucratic” (Brown and Scase, 1997: 89). The emergence of a “creative class” in the United States, whose capital is measured in talent, is noted by Florida (Florida, 2002). In Australia, commentators have drawn attention to the premium placed by Generation X (in their 30s) and Generation Y (in their 20s) on information access, networking, feedback, a balanced lifestyle, socio-economic and environmental issues (McCrindle, 2005). In this type of environment, experience counts for less than the ability to operate at the edge of possible future developments:

“unwillingness to go by precedents and suspicion against accumulated experience ... are now seen as the precepts of effectiveness and productivity. You are as good as your successes; but you are only as good as your *last* successful project” (Bauman, 2005: 44).

Thus, while some long-serving staff may have remained in universities by default, younger staff do not necessarily anticipate a career for life, and wish to acquire experience and qualifications that will be distinctive, equipping them for a future that is more uncertain than it was for their predecessors. The movements that are occurring also raise questions about how far these changes have been as a result of

external factors, and how far they may have been determined by individuals themselves and/or their institutions.

By moving beyond the ‘administration or management?’ debate, the study aims not only to make more explicit changes that are occurring, but also to demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of the identities of the staff concerned. It therefore foregrounds their contribution to the institutional knowledge base and their relationship with academic and other colleagues, so as to:

- Understand the space occupied by professional staff as they move from retrospective roles as “guardians of the regulations” (Barnett, 2000a: 133) and “keeper[s] of the community memory” (McNay, 2005: 43), dedicated to ensuring continuity, to roles involving “inordinately high levels of ... ambiguity” (Duke 2002: 32), in which they have become increasingly active agents;

and to

- Discover whether patterns can be detected in this broad grouping of staff, and whether there are variables that affect its composition, and ongoing movements within it.

From these considerations, the following research questions arise:

1. How do contemporary professional staff construct their identities in terms of:
 - a. The space they occupy.
 - b. Their contribution to institutional knowledge.
 - c. Their relationships, in particular with academic colleagues?

2. What factors facilitate and inhibit the construction of these identities?
3. How are these identities legitimised in the contemporary university?

Context and rationale

The story about professional staff is nested within a broader narrative of the university's developing role as a site of knowledge production and management. The university, in turn, is contextualised within a mass higher education system, with expanding markets in a global environment. To cope with major environmental change and heightened uncertainty (Barnett, 2000a; Bauman, 2000; Hassan, 2003; Urry, 1998, 2003), institutions require increasingly sophisticated understandings about, for instance, student expectations, public relations and marketing, and enterprise partnership. The development of these understandings frequently involves professional staff in performing an interpretive role at the boundaries between institutions and external constituencies.

However, while considerable attention has been paid in higher education literature to the impact of a changing policy environment on academic and disciplinary identities (see for instance, Henkel, 2000, 2005; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Barnett, 2005), the impact on other professional staff has not been clearly articulated. A practitioner literature (for instance, Warner and Palfreyman, 1996; Holmes, 1998; Allen and Newcomb, 1999; Lauwerys, 2002) has focused on a process of professionalisation, via the development of skills and good practice, the acquisition of formal knowledge, and a movement from 'administration' towards 'management', rather than considering the implications of a diversification of professional identities. Likewise, at an official level, the Dearing Report (Dearing, 1997) based its comments on a

small and unrepresentative sample of ‘administrative staff’, which contained fundamental misconceptions (Thomas 1998). Furthermore, the 2003 White Paper (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2003) avoided any direct reference to them.

The lack of a focused study means that professional staff remain poorly documented or understood. There is, also, evidence of a mismatch between local and implicit appreciation of the roles of individuals (for instance, Hare and Hare, 2002; McMaster, 2005), and their identity as a collective when viewed through the lenses of ‘administration’ or ‘management’. The gap in perceptions about individual members of staff, and the collective to which they are seen to belong, leads to unsettled understandings by colleagues, as well as equivocation among professional staff themselves about their roles and identities. Furthermore, a process of professionalisation, via the overarching Association of University Administrators (AUA), as well as via specialist associations, which aims to achieve common approaches and standards of practice, is to some extent in tension with the diversification and fragmentation that has occurred across professional staff groupings, compounding the difficulty of achieving a collective understanding.

New discourses are required, therefore, that allow the identities of these staff to be constructed in ways that move them beyond ‘administration’ or ‘management’. Although commentators such as Prichard (2000), McInnis (1998), Middlehurst (2002), and Lambert (2003) have suggested that further work is needed on such staff, and others, such as Rhoades (2005), and Sharrock (2005), have begun to see them as

integral members of the higher education community, these suggestions remain to be followed up. A review of their contribution and potential, therefore, is both necessary and timely. A clearer definition of the space they occupy within the university community will also provide a stronger platform for career and professional development.

Theoretical framing

The diversification of professional staff as a group, and their increased mobility, means that analysing their identities, or looking for variables that might explain how and why different identities arise, was likely to require a flexible theoretical framework. Initially, a model was sought from the higher education literature that focuses on organisation and management (for instance, Clark, 1995; McNay, 1995; 2005; Sporn, 1999), but it was considered that this was more oriented to structures and processes than to the individuals associated with them. Likewise, the neo-liberal literature, influenced by concepts of New Public Management, tended to focus on government and institutional policy rather than on the construction of individual identities (for instance, Parker and Jary, 1995; Prichard and Willmott, 1997; Deem, 1998).

The concept of professionalism (Eraut, 1994; Macdonald, 1995; Schon, 1995; Friedson, 2001) was also reviewed as a means of understanding changes whereby, for instance, identities could no longer be defined solely by formal roles or job descriptions, although this literature did not fully take account of movements that were occurring. Finally, the concept of identity was considered as a means of

achieving a more dynamic account of the diversification of professional activity, and of the agency of individuals in interpreting their roles and in moving across and outwith structural boundaries. It was decided that such an approach would be a helpful addition to the literature on academic identity, which gives limited attention to professional staff, but tends to position them as ‘the other’ in relation to academic agendas (for instance, Henkel, 2000; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Trowler, 1998, 2002). Finally, in order to capture movements as fully as possible, the concepts of structure and agency (Giddens, 1990; 1991; Archer, 2000) were used to explore the emergence of less boundaried forms of identity whereby, for instance, individuals may construct their identities in a variety of ways, and with multiple components.

Through interviews with middle and senior grade professional staff (the latter equivalent to senior lecturer and above), therefore, the study approaches the construction of identity as a reflexive, iterative process between the individual and the structures in which they find themselves (Giddens, 1991; Delanty, 2005). Categories of identity are developed from the positioning of respondents in relation to institutional structures and boundaries, and from the organisational spaces, knowledges, and relationships associated with these positionings.

Structure of thesis

The first section of the thesis, *Identity Constructs*, reviews understandings about the identities of professional staff in the academic and practitioner literature, and considers how the generic frames of ‘administration’, ‘management’ and

‘professionalism’ fall short in providing a full perspective on professional roles and identities.

The second section, *A Process for Reconstruction*, describes the use of a case study approach, involving three different types of institution, to obtain qualitative data from professional staff at middle and senior levels, and demonstrates how this was analysed to explore identity changes that have taken place, both over time and across spatial contexts.

The third section, *A Typology of Identities*, categorises the respondents in the study according to the approaches they adopt in relation to institutional structures and boundaries. Three groupings of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* are described, together with the spaces that they occupy, the knowledges they offer, the relationships they form, and the legitimacies associated with each category of staff.

The final section, *Beyond Administration and Management*, considers the implications for both individuals and for institutions of the developments in professional identity described in the study, and of the legitimacies associated with them. It concludes by reviewing possible futures for this group of staff in the light of the movements that are taking place.

Conclusion

Professional staff in UK universities represent an increasingly diverse grouping, for whom the generic descriptors ‘administrators’ and ‘managers’ no longer provide a comprehensive picture. Furthermore, ideas of professional identity associated with the possession of a fixed body of knowledge, which confers an enduring status, fail to encompass more open-ended approaches, whereby identities are held and reworked in accordance with current conditions. A conceptual framework of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded* approaches to identity is offered, therefore, as a way of providing a fuller understanding than has been available hitherto of this group of staff.

SECTION 1: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTS

1: ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter reviews the concepts of administration and management in a higher education context, and the contributions they make to understandings of the roles and identities of professional staff. Consideration is given to the usage of the terms ‘administration’ and ‘management’ in pre- and post-1992 institutions, and the relationship between the two. A model is offered that distinguishes between the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ dimensions of each, and the professional approaches that might be represented by these.

It is suggested that, although such a model provides a structural framework from which individuals may, by association, draw aspects of their identity, it fails to offer a comprehensive perspective on professional staff. Because both ‘administration’ and ‘management’ remain contested in academic environments, there is equivocation about their use, and ambiguity and dissonance in the understandings that they convey. Nevertheless, although as generic concepts they fall short in providing a full account of professional identities, ‘administration’ and ‘management’ offer a starting point for the process of reconstruction that will take place in the study.

Pre- and post-1992 traditions

The administrative and management functions performed by professional staff in UK higher education derive from both a public administration tradition in the pre-1992 sector (Sloman, 1964; Shattock, 1970; Lockwood, 1986), and a local government tradition in the post-1992 sector (Scott, 1995; Pratt, 1997). The prime purpose of these functions was to support decision-making by academic colleagues, who undertook their management responsibilities on a part-time, fixed-term basis.

Early commentators viewed this supporting infrastructure, particularly in the pre-1992 sector, as an “academic civil service” (Sloman, 1964; Lockwood, 1986) or “academic administration” (Shattock, 1970). Professional staff at all levels would be expected to provide technical, regulatory and policy advice as members of a homogeneous cadre, incorporating both generalist and specialist roles. There was a clear boundary between what was seen as ‘The Administration’ and academic activity, whereby professional staff performed service roles in relation to the latter, and also to academic staff. While the term ‘academic administration’ is used sometimes to describe those activities that are not teaching and research (for instance, Barnett, 1993), it tends increasingly to refer to registry and secretariat functions, whereby administrators act as “guardians of the regulations” (Barnett, 2000a: 133). One legacy from the ‘administrative’ tradition is that professional staff are seen as a source of continuity, as “keeper[s] of the community memory” (McNay, 2005: 43).

This tradition provided a unitary professional framework, so that an individual in one institution would be assumed to have a similar set of skills and knowledge to those of

someone occupying a similar post in another institution. In the case of the pre-1992 sector, there was a national pay structure, with common role and career patterns between institutions, which were reflected in generic job titles. Career paths were, therefore, relatively predictable, and professional staff were likely to undertake a range of tasks, from academic appointments to research grant administration, from student admissions to examination boards, from committee servicing to publications. Thus, the professional identity of an individual would be drawn principally from their position, about which there were common understandings, and individuals were nested within a well-defined structure. Professional legitimacy derived, therefore, from membership of a nationally recognised cadre of staff. Until the 1980s, generalist staff with their roots in this tradition still occupied specialist roles in personnel, finance and estates (Metcalf, 1998), which in contemporary institutions would require people who were legitimised by the appropriate professional qualifications.

Institutions in the former polytechnic sector had a tradition of appointing permanent full-time managers at the directorate level. There was less evidence of a permanent 'administrative cadre' such as those which supported academic managers in the pre-1992 sector (Pratt, 1997: 197-200), although there were exceptions. This tended to create a gap between senior, full-time managers and staff undertaking lower level, clerking roles, who regarded themselves as local government employees rather than identifying with either their institution or sector:

"To all intents and purposes, the non-academic staff were employed by the local authority, and just happened to be working in the polytechnic" (Pratt, 1997: 199).

Terms and conditions, as well as roles and careers, therefore, were more localised than in the pre-1992 sector. At the professional level, 'generalist' staff were less prominent than specialist staff distinguished by their technical expertise, such as those in finance and estates, which was likely to be transferable between different local government environments. The absence of a national cadre of staff with a common pay structure gave greater scope for postholders to develop their roles in accordance with their specific locale, building credibility and legitimacy in terms of their particular contribution, rather than from expectations associated with generic roles. While there was a stronger tradition of 'management' at the directorate level in the post-1992 sector, the absence of an administrative cadre at other levels meant that established career paths did not exist for professional staff in the same way as in the pre-1992 sector. It was more difficult for individuals to move from junior clerking roles to a senior management level, as the latter roles tended to be filled by academic staff.

The contemporary disposition of professional staff is, therefore, influenced by different employment cultures inherited from the pre- and post-1992 sectors, between which there was not a great deal of movement until after they merged in 1992. A major expansion of the system in the 1980s, also, fostered a more heterogeneous system, so that after 1992, particularly, there was a cross-fertilisation of professional staff, who inherited traditions of:

- Public administration roles in an environment of collegial management from the pre-1992 sector.
- Local government roles in an environment of directorate management from the post-1992 sector.
- Specialist roles in both sectors, filled by experts with recognised professional qualifications.

Administrators and managers: a confusion of terminology

The emergence of contemporary administration and management from two traditions in the pre- and post-1992 sectors may have contributed to a variability in the way that the terms ‘administrator’ and ‘manager’ are used in national data sets and classifications. This is compounded by the fact that, despite perceptions of a shift from administration to management, the two terms continue to co-exist and are used interchangeably. Possibly because of the difficulty of achieving stable or comparable definitions, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collected no information about professional managers and administrators in the combined sector between 1992 and 2003. Thus, while the Bett Report (1999) referred to “Academic Related staff” in the pre-1992 sector as a discrete category, it grouped “Administrative staff” with “Professional, Technical and Clerical Staff” in the post-1992 sector, because no separate data sets were available.

The Dearing Report (1997) demonstrates the confusion of understandings around the terms ‘administrator’ and ‘manager’. The Report included a case study on what it defined in Supplementary Report 4 as “administrative and support staff”. This group

included computing, library and technical staff in addition to administrative staff, so that the latter were placed with widely differing occupational types. However, the ‘administrators’ (eight people out of a total sample of thirty-two in the case study) included individuals on both clerical and academic-related grades, from a pay roll clerk to a careers adviser. Nor did the sample grouping include individuals from central functions, such as student services or institutional planning (Thomas, 1998). Furthermore, institutions were asked “not to include the names of senior staff or managers” in their nominations for focus groups of administrative and non-academic staff (Dearing Supplementary Report 4, Appendix 1, paragraph 5). Thus, although senior administrative staff were included in the sample, they were not regarded as ‘managers’. Not only does the report demonstrate uncertainty about what is meant by ‘administrator’, but it suggests by implication, though not by explicit statement, that administrators cannot also be managers, or occupy senior positions.

By contrast, in 2002, a report by the Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA) (HESDA, 2002), used definitions based on the Labour Force Survey for Spring 2001 to classify administrators across the combined sector as a professional grouping in their own right. Thus, “registrars and administrators of educational establishments”, were distinguished from contiguous groups such as academic managers, teaching and learning professionals, information and communication professionals, and technical and clerical staff. This discrete grouping of “registrars and administrators” is broken down further by Compton (2001), and includes a range of career professionals, from specialist staff, such as those in finance and human resources, to generalist staff, such as those in student services or departmental

management. Details of the HESDA, HESA and Compton classifications are given in Appendices 1-4.

National data collection for professional categories of staff re-commenced in 2003/04 (HESA, 2005). The occupational codings used, devised on behalf of the Institute for Employment Research (Davies and Ellison, 2002), reversed HESDA's approach by including "managers", but not "administrators". Significantly, 'administrators' are subsumed within "administrative assistants", a grouping that also includes "library assistants" and "clerks", and is defined specifically in terms of non-graduate staff. This indicates a clear break from the use of the term 'administration' to refer to a graduate entry to an administrative cadre represented by the "academic-related" grades in the pre-1992 sector, and illustrates a change in terminology for the combined sector since the HESDA report. Likewise, HEFCE (2005: 19), drawing on the HESA data, combines managers in a category with other types of professional ("Managers and professionals"), and administrators in a category with clerical and other support staff ("Support administrators").

Significantly, none of these official publications give definitions of the terms "administrator" and "manager". Each set of role classifications appears to have been created without reference to earlier ones, and without acknowledgement of a wider frame of reference or possible movements in meaning. The reports are also silent about the reasons for inclusion or exclusion of 'administrators' as a discrete category, or for the coupling or decoupling of 'administrators' and 'managers'. Thus, there is no indication of assumptions made in relation to classifications, or of any critical

evaluation of them, permitting slippages of meaning to occur. The terminologies that are available, therefore, lack rigour as descriptors of professional identities.

Distinguishing ‘administration’ and ‘management’

The Oxford English Dictionary (Fowler and Fowler, 1957) defines “administration” as to “dispense, supply or furnish” and “management” as “to conduct the working of”. In simple terms, therefore, the former might be seen as implying a more passive orientation, associated with stewardship and service, and the latter a more active orientation, associated with the direction and control of activity (including responsibility for people, resources, and decision-making). In a higher education context, the practice of administration derives from a public administration tradition (Levin, 1972; Self, 1972; Vickers, 1983), and tends to refer to the maintenance of processes, systems and standards, as well as a contribution to policy-making, although this would imply proposing options and making recommendations, rather than playing a direct part in decision-making: “the administrator’s function being to present information and advice to part-time, academic, decision-makers” (Shattock, 1970). The legacy of this model is that professional staff might be said to occupy the middle ground between academic managers such as pro-vice-chancellors and deans, with responsibility for institutional decision-making, and mainstream academic staff, principally occupied with teaching and research.

The concept of management, deriving from organisation theory, includes, for instance, Fayol’s five elements of planning, organising, commanding, co-ordinating and controlling (Fayol, 1949), and a more applied approach suggests “configur[ing]

and direct[ing] the resource-conversion process in such a way as to optimise the attainment of objectives” (Ansoff, 1986: 17). Building on these ideas, a literature on corporate strategy (for instance, Johnson and Scholes, 1993) stresses the importance of reading and responding to the environment, and making provision for the future by developing the organisation appropriately. This has been applied in a higher education context by writers such as Keller, 1983; Shattock, 2003; Clark, 2004; Watson and Maddison, 2005; and Sharrock, 2006. However, as will be seen in the following chapter, the concept of ‘management’ is both contested and problematised in a higher education setting, whether it is applied to professional managers or to academic managers. Moreover, the increasing uncertainty and complexity of environments has implications for traditional management activities of anticipating, planning and endeavouring to control future activity.

In practice, at an institutional level, administrative and management activity are likely co-exist, and individuals to be involved in both. An attempt is made at this point, therefore, to establish a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the two. Following Trow (1994: 13-15) and Becher and Trowler (2001: 36), administration and management are characterised in terms of “soft” and “hard” dimensions, as shown in Figure 1, page 31. “Soft” attributes represent people-oriented approaches aimed at offering a service both to individuals and to the university community (soft administration), or the achievement of outcomes through consensus decisions arising from negotiation and debate (soft management). These “soft” approaches contrast with the quasi-legal upholding of regulatory processes, standards and values (hard administration), and the pursuit of an institution’s

**Figure 1: Characteristics of Administration and Management, Distinguished by
“Hard” and “Soft” Dimensions**

Hard	
<p>“Hard” Administration</p> <p>Promotes the institution’s public service role Regulatory/contractual Standard-driven Distance between information-giver and recipient Quasi-legal</p> <p><i>Legitimated by:</i> “Justice”</p>	<p>“Hard” Management</p> <p>Promotes the institution as a market player Departments/budgetary units ‘pay their way’ Rewards and incentives Competition Opportunism Distance between managers and managed Individuals subordinated to institutional interest</p> <p><i>Legitimated by:</i> “Performance”</p>
Administration	Management
<p>“Soft” Administration</p> <p>Serves individuals in their locale Provides support/advice Anticipates/solves problems Protects against eg regulatory/financial risk Works one-to-one Offers individual solutions</p> <p><i>Legitimated by:</i> “Service”</p>	<p>“Soft” Management</p> <p>Facilitates institutional decision-making Undertakes policy-making Consensual decisions Equal shares for all (positive or negative) Uses debate and compromise Develops institution as community Fosters individual potential</p> <p><i>Legitimated by:</i> “Negotiation”</p>
Soft	

business interests in a market environment, which may involve risk, and choices that favour one section of the institution over another (hard management).

“Soft” administration

“Soft” administration typically involves advisory roles, for instance about sources of information and the solving of problems. In a student services environment this would include one-to-one advice, and ensuring that individual students obtain the academic and pastoral attention that they require. Similarly, in a school office, a business manager would brief the head of school on the budgetary and management information required for a management meeting, so that the head is not ambushed in a debate, for instance, about the filling of a post. This is resource-intensive work, geared towards meeting the particular requirements of a particular client at a specific time and location. Information is conveyed in such a way that it can be understood by, and be of benefit to, the receiver. It therefore demands an ability to comprehend and empathise with the needs of others, and is legitimated by the provision of “service”.

“Hard” administration

“Hard” administration involves the practice of even-handedness and justice, and is expressed in rules and boundaries that regulate activity and ensure fair play. It represents, for instance, those aspects of the work of professional staff in handling an increasing burden of legal and statutory requirements (such as health and safety, financial and academic audit, data protection and risk assessment). It emphasises the application of procedure, rather than bespoke or individual solutions, and is system-

oriented, designed to maintain security of provision and to avoid disaster, such as breaches of legal requirements or financial accountabilities. It is critical not least because of the reputational damage that can be caused by the adverse publicity attracted by breakdowns in good practice. As external accountabilities have grown, this function has become more high profile in meeting, for instance, the requirements of the quality assessment agencies for teaching and research, and an increasingly litigious environment in relation to both employment practices and student progress. It is, therefore, legitimated by the provision of “justice”.

“Soft” management

“Soft” management, while taking cognisance of market considerations and institutional positioning in relation to these, takes a holistic approach by placing these in a wider context of, for instance, institutional reputation and commitment to a local community. Thus, the financial risks and advantages of expansion into a new campus serving part-time, non-traditional students are weighed against the qualitative impact on the shape of academic programmes, modes of delivery and the university’s overall teaching and research profile.

A “soft” management view would consider the future of small-scale subject areas in the context of synergies between disciplines, rather than purely in terms of cost-benefit analysis, and look for options around the possible re-alignment of programmes. Internally, “soft” management is characterised by debate about the distribution of resources, using external market pressures as one, but not the sole, element in decision-making. It tolerates compromise solutions, playing to

institutional strengths and adjusting activities to achieve optimal outcomes across the board. Finally, “soft” management balances a long-term view of institutional and individual development with the shorter-term performance of institutional segments year on year. It is, therefore, legitimated by an approach based on “negotiation”.

“Hard” management

“Hard” management represents the business aspects of operating in a market environment, with the aim of generating commercial income. This ethos is likely to be distributed across the institution so that academic and functional departments are regarded as business units, and expected to demonstrate their value by breaking even year-on-year in terms of income and expenditure. It is driven primarily, therefore, by considerations of profit and loss, and also by ambitions to build new markets. If it becomes dominant in an institution it may, also, create an ethos of internal competition, usually through reward and incentive systems, such as the return of overheads to principal research investigators, or the pricing of services between internal ‘customers’.

Thus, internal competition between individuals or departments may be used to point up, for instance, levels of research income or overseas student fees, putting pressure on both professional and academic staff to demonstrate their value to the institution on an ongoing basis. Externally, the entrepreneurial end of ‘hard’ management includes not only the seeking of new markets, but also the creation of demand by establishing products and services to sell in these markets, such as programmes for local employers or overseas students (such a distinction between “management” and

“entrepreneurship” is made by Friedson, 2001: 117). There is, therefore, little space for compromise, and it is characterised by pressure to maintain “performance”.

Administration and management: an uneasy co-existence

Despite their different orientations, both ‘administration’ and ‘management’ are constructs that, in their own way, seek to establish systematic processes that will maximise outcomes: administration by establishing efficient procedures in the pursuit of optimal solutions, and management by adopting an orderly approach to decision-making. The distinctions made above between ‘administration’ and ‘management’ would broadly define the former in terms of the trusteeship of a body of accumulated knowledge, supporting the regulatory aspects of processes and the upholding of standards, and the latter more actively as involving choices and decisions about institutional futures, on the basis of evidence of risks and benefits in relation to these.

Both concepts assume clear boundaries in stable and controlled environments, about which information can be gathered and acted upon. However, as the environments within which institutions operate have become less regular or certain, establishing and maintaining processes and systems becomes less significant in preparing institutions for the future. For instance, resource allocation models, usually subject to ongoing adjustment, may provide some guidance about how to apportion regular income, but do not necessarily assist with decisions about purchasing an adjacent building that has just come on the market, or meeting the demands of a research star who is in negotiation with more than one institution. Such decisions often have to be made with rapidity, and may involve significant risk. Thus, the spaces within which

professional staff work have become less regular or certain, particularly in terms of assumptions or predictions that may be made for the future.

As professional staff took on activity directed at institutional futures, as well as the maintenance of institutional systems and processes, they also became involved in the re-orientation of their institutions, which, according to one commentator, could no longer:

“define themselves as members of a fixed ‘class’ or institution with a predetermined mission; they no longer had ‘given’ identities” (Scott, 2003: 73).

Difficulties about conceptualising the meaning of ‘management’ in institutional settings may have contributed to diffidence on the part of both professional and academic staff about being overly specific about movements in professional identities.

The existence of two currencies, ‘administration’ and ‘management’, has also created confusion in respect of how each might be understood, and how the activities of professional staff might be legitimised. Both ‘administration’ and ‘management’ are contested, in that the former may be interpreted as imposing excessive procedural and bureaucratic requirements, and the latter as representing an imperative to control academic activity, and thereby curtail the professional autonomy of academic staff. Professional managers, therefore, can be trapped in a double negative, whichever frame of reference they inhabit. If they adopt an administrative service mode, they are regarded as “docile clerks” (Scott, 1995: 64), but if they contribute to decision- and policy-making, they are perceived as being overly powerful (Halsey, 1992).

This kind of dissonance is illustrated across the academic literature. On the one hand, academic managers can be dismissive of ‘administrators’ because they see them as uncomfortable with the requirement to take responsibility and manage:

“they ... only administrate if there is somebody telling them what to do”
(Vice-Chancellor; pre-1992 university) (Prichard, 2000: 127).

and

“The service people provide services and are therefore subservient ... They are not initiators or developers of the institution” (Pro-vice-chancellor, post-1992 university) (Prichard, 2000: 190).

As a result:

“Administrators ... [are] viewed by academics as rule-bound, bureaucratic, more concerned with process and systems than with the substance of issues, and lacking in imagination” Seyd (2000: 35).

On the other hand, perceptions of ‘managers’ can also be negative, particularly if they align professional staff with unpopular policies such as the implementation of an internal restructuring programme, or externally imposed audit requirements, even though these staff may not themselves be responsible for creating the policies. They may, therefore, become identified as the perpetrators (rather than interpreters) of unwelcome procedures. Thus:

“the Research Assessment Exercise ... renders senior academics and administrators more explicitly accountable as supervisors and organisers of academic labour, responsible for ‘performance’ which is measured in largely quantitative terms” (Prichard and Willmott, 1997: 297-8).

Such perceptions continue to persist, as shown in the correspondence in *The Times Higher* (4 May 2007: 15; 20 April 2007: 15) about an anonymous claim that “even the best university administrators are at best only fourth raters” (4 May 2007). Furthermore, the author of this claim conflates the terms ‘administrator’, ‘manager’ and ‘managerialism’. This example illustrates the kind of confusion that is liable to occur between the abstract concept of ‘management’, involving a collective of both academic and professional managers, for instance in a senior management team, and the roles of individual managers. Thus, when the term ‘administrator’ is used in the context of ‘management’, it implies a reference to professional managers, as opposed to academic managers. The legitimacy associated with ‘management’, therefore, is likely to vary according to whether it is practised by an academic or professional member of staff, because of sensitivities that continue to arise about the perceived autonomy of academics, and about who might be controlling their activities.

These sensitivities about the legitimacy of the activities of professional staff reinforce evidence that although individuals may build up valued relationships locally, with colleagues such as deans or heads of school (Gornitzka et al, 1998; Bolton, 2000; Hare and Hare, 2002; McMaster, 2005), this value is not necessarily reflected, or expressed, when professional staff are viewed as a collective, or as part of “management” (as in Henkel, 2000: 253). Furthermore, there is not always common understanding between academic and professional colleagues about what might be a valued local relationship. For instance, in an Australian context, McMaster (2005: 135-6) found that whereas twelve of fifteen deans interviewed described their relationship with their faculty manager as one of “partnership”, no more than five

faculty managers used that term, viewing their role as a “support function”. Similar tensions may arise also in Clark’s (1998) “core” and “periphery” model. If professional staff pursue an agenda supporting the interests of their academic colleagues in the “academic heartland”, they are at risk of being accused of “going native” by their colleagues at the centre. If they pursue a corporate line, they may be seen as prioritising what are perceived by academic colleagues as management concerns (Whitchurch, 2004).

Yet, despite a feeling that academic staff have become increasingly overburdened by the demands of, for instance, accountability requirements (Henkel, 2000; Prichard, 2000), there is also ambivalence about the devolution of tasks to dedicated professional staff:

“...academics want to govern themselves but they rarely want to manage; they are often poor managers when they do manage; and yet they deny rights of management to others” (Dearlove, 1998: 73).

The same point is made in a US context by Lewis and Altbach (1996: 256-7), and in a Norwegian context by Gornitzka et al (1998: 42).

Thus, the ‘administration or management?’ debate is not a simple dichotomy, and the positioning of professional staff can vary. For instance, Prichard notes that academic administrators may form alliances with mainstream academic staff over an issue in a faculty or department, in opposition to ‘managerial’ approaches by academic or service managers (for instance directors of resources or estates) who represent corporate interests:

“a ‘state of hostilities’ has tended to exist ... between the ascendant managerial knowledge practices and ... academic and administrative knowledge practices” (Prichard 2000: 199).

Here, ‘administration’ is seen to be aligned with academic interests, in support of staff and students in matters such as programme delivery, and ‘management’ with corporate interests, such as promoting the institution’s position in a competitive environment. However, there may also be occasions when a professional member of staff is obliged to argue against, for instance, the pleas of an academic tutor to make a special dispensation for a tutee and set aside regulations, because of the precedent it would create.

Thus, the collective profile of professional staff, and the legitimacy accorded to them, is at best confused, or absent altogether from the wider literature on academic identities. As a result, some commentators have suggested that because professional staff are defined in relation to academic staff, for instance, as ‘non-academic’, ‘academic-related’ or ‘support’ staff, they are positioned as the anthropological ‘other’ (Gornall, 1999; Conway, 2000):

“They are ‘threshold people’ who fall on or between the boundaries of categories, a ‘liminal’ status, which social anthropologists argue, carries implications of ... marginalisation (Leach, 1976: 35)...” (Gornall, 1999: 48).

Szekeres (2003: 7), likewise, refers to “invisible workers”. The absence of a reference to professional staff in the 2003 White Paper (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2003) would seem to support this claim, and suggests that the negative

values attached to both ‘administration’ and ‘management’ may lie behind a reluctance to make explicit, or legitimise, the space available to these staff.

Conway (2000) picks up this dissonance by reference to “...the duality of being valued and invisible” and suggests that:

“... it is probably time for ‘a wider re-think about boundaries, constituencies and names’. Whatever term is chosen, it will be more important to define that term carefully and place it very clearly in the higher education lexicon than to worry too much about the exact words used” (Conway, 2000:15).

However, the difficulties described in this chapter suggest that precise descriptors may not be achievable within more fluid higher education contexts, and that in reconstructing professional identities it may be necessary to move beyond singular concepts such as ‘administration’ and ‘management’.

Conclusion

As a starting point for the study, this chapter offered a model distinguishing ‘administration’ and ‘management’ through the use of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ dimensions, and ways in which these might relate to each other. Evidence is given of difficulties arising from the co-existence of both terms, of their use as markers of identity for professional staff, and of the continuing equivocation that exists in relation to them.

These factors have led to:

- An instability in official definitions of the terms ‘administrator’ and ‘manager’.

- A dissonance in understandings of ‘administration’ and ‘management’, and the legitimacies that might be accorded to them.
- A contestation of both ‘administration’ and ‘management’ in academic contexts.

As a result of these difficulties, the space accorded to professional staff by the two concepts is both confused and contested, and has the potential for fostering ambiguous and conflicted identities. The chapter that follows considers specific difficulties associated with a perceived shift towards ‘management’, arising from changed relationships between higher education and the state, and reflected in organisational arrangements at local level.

2: THE SHIFT TO MANAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter reviews the shift that has taken place over time from ‘administration’ to ‘management’, and ways in which management has been contested in a higher education context. At sector level, the shift is represented by the transformation of higher education worldwide, as national systems expand and governments seek to supplement public sources of funding by encouraging institutions to attract additional income streams via the market. At local level, the shift has been portrayed in terms of the imposition of a business ethos on traditional institutional management practices, and may be responsible for a continued equivocation in the UK about the use of the term ‘management’. In some institutions, this is reflected in apparent collusion between professional and academic staff in perpetuating the use of ‘administration’ as a camouflage for management. This reinforces ambiguity and dissonance in relation to understandings of professional roles and identities, and the legitimacies associated with them, noted in chapter one.

The chapter considers how the concept of “managerialism” has emerged in a body of neo-liberal literature, representing an extreme form of “hard”, or in Barnett’s terms, “unbridled” management (Barnett, 2005: 57). However, it is suggested that this literature does not acknowledge or explore the spaces that have emerged for professional staff, or the possibilities available to them to work actively at and across institutional boundaries, as they assist in the development of their institutions.

The shift from administration to management: at system level

While in practice administration and management continue to co-exist in institutions, perceptions of a shift from administration to management have been the subject of a significant body of neo-liberal literature, for instance, Becher and Kogan, 1992; Halsey, 1992; Parker and Jary, 1995; Reid, 1996; Prichard and Willmott, 1997; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Blake, Smith and Standish, 1998; Trowler, 1998, 2002; Deem, 1998; Marginson and Considine, 2000; Amaral, Jones and Karseth, 2002; Bok, 2003; Peters, 2004. These commentators reflect a broader literature on New Public Management, a government approach that obliged public sector organisations to operate in accordance with market imperatives, and is associated with the concept of “managerialism” (for instance, Ranson and Stewart, 1994; Pollitt, 1990; Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald and Pettigrew, 1996; Ranson, Martin, McKeown and Nixon, 1998).

In the neo-liberal literature, the shift from administration to management in higher education is framed in terms of:

- Government policies that require universities to become more market-oriented. This requirement encompasses both the creation of an internal, system-wide market, whereby institutions are required to bid competitively for public sources of funding, and also entry into external markets, for instance in relation to overseas students.
- The introduction of an ethos of ‘enterprise’, whereby institutions are expected to foster activities the prime aim of which is to generate income (rather than being established solely for academic purposes).

- Increased accountability, audit and control by government via, for instance, national teaching and research assessment processes.
- Government policies that stress the role of universities in serving socio-economic agendas, focusing on instrumental approaches to academic programmes and learning methods, and on the performance of institutions in relation to this.
- Within institutions, increased competition (and competitive behaviour) for resources.
- Increased control and regulation of the work of academic staff by those with management responsibilities, be they professional or academic managers.
- A transfer of power and authority from academic staff, whose prime responsibility is teaching and research, to managers, accompanied by a weakening of the professional autonomy and status of academics.
- The separation and even polarisation of academic and management activity, rather than their interleaving via collegial and consensual decision-making.

“Managerialism”, therefore, implies an extreme form of “hard” management as described in chapter one (page 31). In particular, it suggests that entrepreneurial activity has developed a momentum of its own, so that institutions are at the mercy of open market conditions.

As organisations, universities are seen as having shifted from the “Bureaucracy” and “Collegium” quadrants of the model devised by McNay, to the quadrants representing “Corporation” and “Enterprise” (McNay, 1995: 106). Furthermore, a polarisation of management and academic activity implies that association with one type of activity

would preclude association with another. Thus, Middlehurst (1993: 190) notes “clear fault-lines ... between, for example, academics and administrators, staff and ‘management’”, and Rowland (2002: 53) “fracture or fault lines” across staff groupings. Views that place academic and management activity in opposition to each other persist (see for instance, Fulton, 2003; Yelder and Codling, 2004). There is a sense in which the perceived shift from administration to management, and the relationship of both with academic activity, become political issues, as well as a matter of professional identity. Thus, both academic and professional staff each appear to see the other as more powerful, and themselves as marginalised (Halsey, 1992; Deem, 1998; Conway, 2000; Gornall, 1999).

However, the neo-liberal literature, which refers to broad international policy trends, tends not to distinguish between different types and levels of manager within institutions. These can include, for instance:

- People in academic management roles, such as pro-vice-chancellors, deans and heads of department.
- Professional managers, undertaking general or specialist management roles.
- Mainstream academic staff, who may be managing a research or teaching programme and a team of staff.

Nor does this literature disentangle the spread of roles and responsibilities that are characteristic of distributed management arrangements across schools and faculties. The multiple locales of management in any one institution may include, for instance:

- Top management teams and groups.

- Committees with responsibility for strategy and resources.
- Academic departments.
- Research settings (laboratories, libraries, research units).
- Functional departments such as finance or human resources.
- Faculties and schools, with their own senior teams and strategy committees.

Thus, management is not confined to the top of the institution, nor does it occur solely from the top down. In any case, recent research shows that senior management teams are likely to comprise no more than four to six people (Kennie and Woodfield, 2006; 2007). This is not likely to include more than one or two professional managers, who would not therefore represent the majority of key institutional decision-makers, with the power that this might imply.

Understandings of the concept of ‘management’ also require recognition of contingent variables within organisations, for instance the nature of their business or service activities, their size and configuration, and ways in which internal arrangements may vary between units (Johnson and Scholes, 1993). In a higher education context, this has been picked up by, for instance, Bolden, Petrov and Gosling (2007: 78), who highlight how informal structures and networks, such as heads of school fora, teaching and research groups, influence the operation of formal institutional systems and processes. Contemporary management activity is also likely to involve individuals who may have significant influence, such as principal investigators and programme co-ordinators, but who are “only partially recognised in formal organisational structures” (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling, 2007: 78).

Understandings are required, therefore, on the part of the managers, about the contribution of informal spaces and networks to the social capital of an institution.

Terms such as 'management' and 'managerialism', therefore, disguise the fact that management activity is not necessarily evenly characterised or distributed across institutions. Schools and faculties, for instance, are increasingly appointing their own staff in relation to functions as diverse as public relations, research spin out, and business management. Distributed management arrangements may involve mixed teams working on projects such as bids for funding, quality assurance and widening participation, comprising academic and professional managers, as well as mainstream academic staff. Such working arrangements might be said to resemble a "transformative" form of organisation, "where work is more team-based, hierarchies are flattened and considerable attention is paid to long-term goals and to the management of organisational cultures" (Deem, 1998: 50).

Although the neo-liberal literature emphasises the impact of policy movements on academic staff, less attention is paid to the effects on individual managers, be they from an academic or professional background. For instance, little account is taken of the struggles that may occur for these managers in managing tensions that emerge from policy environments, or from boundary space that they may be occupying as they work on projects crossing institutional structures and functions. A statement such as "the dull but worthy 'administrator' who supported the professional [academic] becomes the dynamic leader-manager who directs and inspires other professionals" (Parker and Jary, 1995: 324) is not only an over-simplification, but

disregards the fact that professional staff are also subject to the challenges of more accountable and market-oriented environments. A quality manager, for instance, may tread a careful path between gaining the confidence of external quality assessors, anticipating and facilitating their requirements on an institutional visit, learning from them and building knowledge for the institution on the basis of this, at the same time as encouraging institutional colleagues to provide documentation that will achieve the highest possible ratings. Such professional managers would, therefore, be working with the grain of requirements imposed by government, but also interpreting them at local level to achieve the best outcome for the institution. Such a person might be said, therefore, to be a mediator, rather than a perpetrator, of government policy.

Thus, understandings about where management is located, who is managing whom and which function, and how this translates in day-to-day terms, tend to be neglected in the neo-liberal literature, and the situation may be more complex and nuanced in day-to-day terms than is immediately apparent. Thus, a large and influential international study conducted by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) focused on economic and policy trends in higher education and, therefore, did not examine the detail of individual identities. In making their case as to the development of increasingly commercial cultures in institutions, they targeted their interviews on units concerned with knowledge transfer, research spin out and entrepreneurship, where the majority of respondents were, in any case, academic staff with management responsibilities, rather than professional staff. This did not, therefore, provide a balanced view of the range of identities available to professional staff across the university, or of the range of relationships that they might have with their academic colleagues.

Nevertheless, within this literature, there is some acknowledgement that professional staff are not invariably associated with “managerialism”. For instance, Trowler suggests that an increase in the power of “non-academic administrators” is “a possible *but not invariant* consequence of” a perceived reduction in the autonomy of academic staff (Trowler, 2002: 58) (CW’s italics), and quotes one respondent who:

“summed up the feeling of many respondents: ‘It’s a more managed institution than it ever was ... The academic delivery etc is driven by management objectives so that’s where the shift is. It’s not in the administration’ ” (Trowler, 1998: 52).

This reflects the view expressed in Prichard (2000:199) (page 40) of a perceived cleavage within institutions between ‘administration’ and ‘management’, with the former supporting academic agendas in the “academic heartland” (Clark, 1998) in opposition to management at the corporate level.

Becher and Kogan, also, provide a more balanced picture, offering a sense of the diversification of professional staff identities, as well as of ways that professional staff are opening up “areas of activity on the boundaries of the institution” (Becher and Kogan, 1992: 75). Furthermore, they acknowledge that the picture is not an even one, so that while some professional staff may have “taken to themselves decision-making powers in excess of those normally accorded to those working in professionally rather than commercially ... dominated institutions”, others “have managed to maintain a more traditional balance between central and individual initiatives in the framing of purposes” (Becher and Kogan, 1992: 182).

Looking forward, Marginson and Considine (2000) suggest that “flatter networked structures based on genuine collaboration between [the central] management [team] and academic units” could assist in developing “reflexive management”, based on “critical thinking”, and in establishing “equality of respect between academic leaders and general staff leaders, and a negotiated division of labour” (Marginson and Considine, 2000: 251-252). It would seem, therefore, that the emergence of increased project and team working (Whitchurch, 2006a; 2008) may have begun to facilitate new forms of relationship.

Despite the generally critical stance towards management in the neo-liberal literature, and the fact that this literature does not provide a sustained or nuanced picture of professional staff, there may, nevertheless, be glimpses of possibilities for them in the “interstices of managerialism” (Bundy, 2004: 173):

“The central challenge, to administrators as much as to academics, is to contest the excesses of managerialism, conserve the successes of management, and to reconstruct the purpose, worth and value of the university” (Bundy, 2004: 173).

Thus, notwithstanding a sense of negativity about what are perceived as excessively “hard” forms of management, represented as “managerialism”, there are also indications that there may be space available for professional managers in contributing to broader agendas in the university, which might be helpfully explored in the study. These might include, for instance, making connections, and interpreting, between different constituencies of the university, and also with external partners.

The shift from administration to management: at institutional level

The impact on the organisational arrangements of institutions of the shift away from administration towards management has been described by Whitchurch (2004). In the 1970s (Figure 2), the then university sector was characterised by strongly bounded institutions served by academic administrations. Adjacent to these administrations were a small number of key functions required to maintain the organisational infrastructure such as finance, personnel and estates. These functions were likely to be located in one building, known as The Registry or The Administration, with possible out-posting of registry/secretariat staff in faculty, school or departmental offices.

Figure 2: 1970s Academic Administration

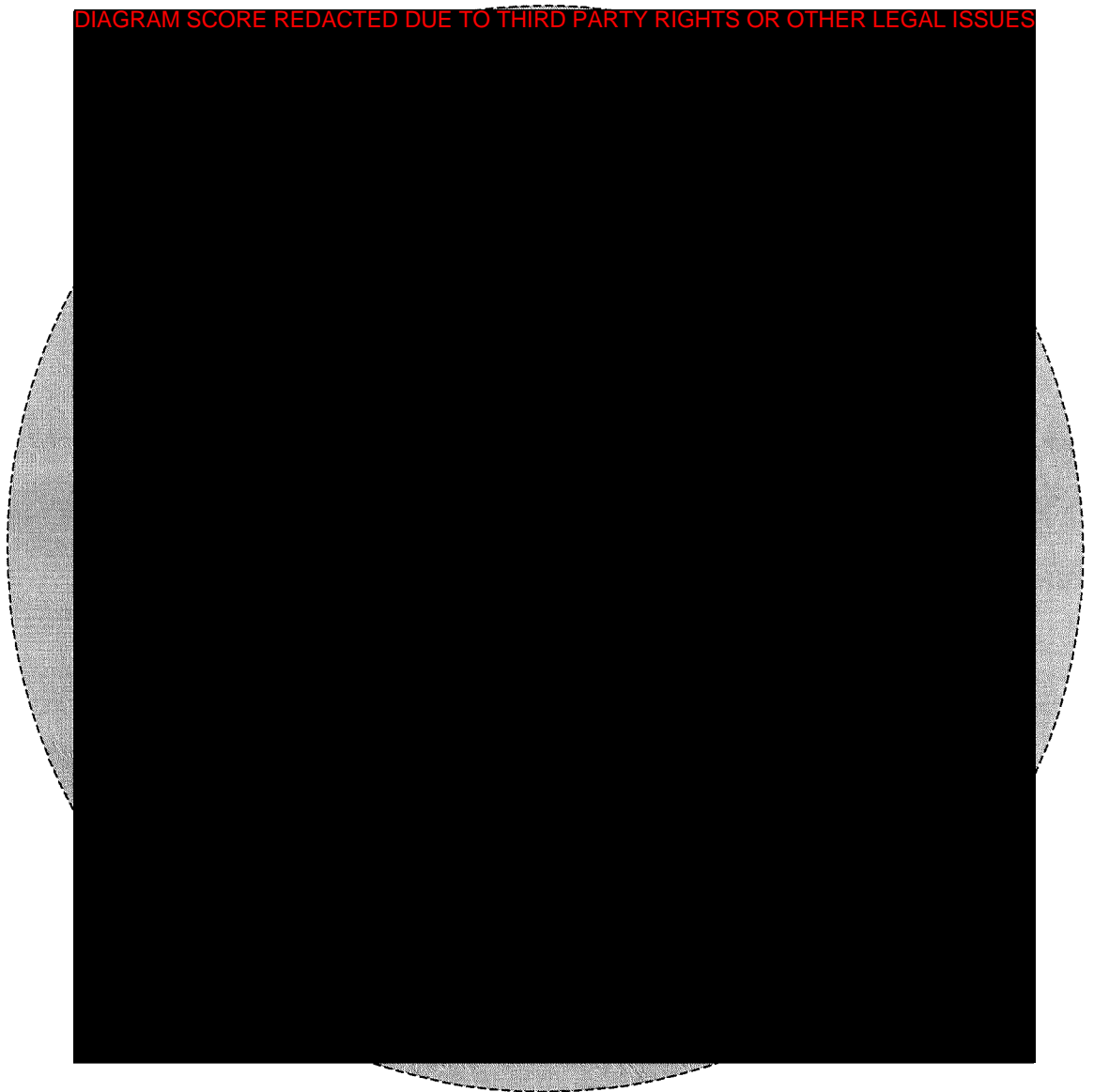
DIAGRAM SCORE REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



In this scenario, identities were stable and distinguishable from each other by professional specialism and/or by affiliation to an academic location, such as a school or faculty. At this stage, therefore, the identities of both generalist and specialist professionals might be described as having essential components in relation to the tasks they performed, the way in which they performed them, and their relationship with colleagues and with their institutions. There was, however, the possibility of tension in the dual relationship that some administrators had with academic managers in schools and faculties such as deans, and with their line manager in the academic administration.

Shifts away from public service administration modes of operation can be dated to around the time of the Jarratt report (Jarratt, 1985), which highlighted what were perceived as shortcomings in collegial decision-making processes after the government cuts of 1981 (University Grants Committee (UGC), 1981). Internal and external boundaries became more permeable as institutions became more consumer-oriented. Figure 3, page 54, illustrates the effect of devolving management responsibility within institutions. Although the precise form of arrangements varied according to the size and shape of individual institutions, academic managers such as deans and heads of department were required to manage budgets and to produce local business plans, as well as to give academic leadership.

This development was accompanied by the creation of senior management teams, located in what Clark terms the “central steering core” (Clark, 1998). Strong lines of communication were retained from the “core” to the academic periphery, and

Figure 3: 1980s/1990s Devolved Management

reinforced by dedicated assistance to budget holders by professional finance, estates and human resource specialists. Such people might be physically located, part-time or full-time, in faculties and departments. Thus, in devolved organisational arrangements, a business manager at faculty, school and department level would be likely to translate for the senior management team the resource and opportunity costs

of, for instance, new modes of curriculum delivery. Such people would differ from faculty registrars by their influence on budget management and decisions about resources.

Professional staff in universities, therefore, might be said to have shifted from roles in which they were perceived as repositories of regulatory information, to roles that were oriented towards a range of clients including, for instance, students, academic colleagues and external funders and partners. The practice of publishing service level statements in relation to, for instance, turnaround times and standards of accuracy, illustrates a focus on the requirements of those receiving the service, be it a staff member requiring a repair in their office, or a postgraduate student requiring a response to their application.

Thus, as institutions expanded to create a mass national higher education system, and also to operate in regional and global markets, they appointed staff with expertise in areas such as widening participation and quality audit, marketing and business development. Scott (1995) noted an “upgrading of managerial capacity” as “one of the most significant but underrated phenomena of the last two decades”, whereby:

“A managerial cadre began to emerge, ready to support a more executive leadership, in place of the docile clerks, who had instinctively acknowledged the innate authority of academics” (Scott, 1995: 64).

The systemic shift towards management was also reflected at an individual level in changes in job titles (Middlehurst, 2004: 268; Whitchurch, 2004: 294; Whitchurch,

2006a: 162), in which descriptors such as “administrative” and “registrar” were replaced by, for instance, terms such as “manager” and “director”.

Camouflaging ‘management’

Notwithstanding changes in job titles, equivocation about the legitimacy of ‘management’ in a UK context is reflected in collusion between professional and academic staff in continuing to use the term ‘administration’, even when referring to ‘management’ activity. This is illustrated, for instance, by Warner and Palfreyman (1996). Despite the title of their book, *Higher Education Management: The Key Elements*, and their use of ‘management’ throughout, their description of the work of professional staff is couched in terms of public administration, of ensuring efficiency and effectiveness, rather than, for instance, addressing the risks associated with a more business-oriented approach. Thus, they define ‘management’ as:

“running an operation with certain limited resources and within set parameters in the most economical and efficient way compatible with being effective in achieving agreed objectives” (Warner and Palfreyman, 1996: 3).

Nevertheless, they suggest that there is a distinction between commercial services and academic units so that (in 1996 at least), whilst catering services in universities might have ‘managers’, schools and faculties were more likely to have ‘administrators’, although this is less likely to be the case in contemporary institutions.

Kogan, also, notes an expansion in the range of tasks of what he terms “non-academic” administrators, acknowledging the emergence of professional roles concerned with “developing the ‘personality’ of the institution by promulgating it

effectively in the external environment ... [and] concerned with activities which may change the boundaries of the institution, such as developing entrepreneurial activities” (Kogan, 1999: 275). He nevertheless sees this activity as ‘administration’, firmly rooted in “a concern for public accountability and for predictability” (Kogan, 1999: 269). Likewise, in an Australian context, McInnis uses the term ‘administrator’ to describe staff whom he sees as involved in ‘management’:

“a new level of underlying tension between two groups of ‘professionals’ within the universities with the old (academics) perhaps losing ground in authority and status, and the new (administrators) making strong claims for recognition as legitimate partners in the strategic management of the university” (McInnis, 1998: 171).

Even those who are critical of ‘administration’ remain equivocal. For instance, Slee, who suggests that the concept of “university administration” will die out, (Slee, 1998; 2003), retains the idea of the *administrator* in a support role:

“Those administrators who remain ... will focus on supporting the core teaching, research, training and trading processes” (Slee, 1998: 92).

Nevertheless, these “support” roles involve management-oriented activity such as “attracting customers”, “managing finance, strategic management and planning” and “maintaining relationships with key constituencies” (Slee, 1998: 92). Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the concept of the public service administrator would appear to have lost credibility as a professional category, both in official definitions and in the literature, elements of it remain, as if to moderate the idea of ‘management’ in an academic setting. Therefore, the identities of professional staff

cannot simply be described in terms of the decline of the ‘administrator’ and the rise of the ‘manager’.

There is, therefore, diffidence among practitioners about their own self-identity, even if they acknowledge that a shift has taken place from ‘administration’ to ‘management’. Thus:

“...good university management means recognising and distinguishing what is best left relatively ‘unmanaged’ from what must be firmly managed”
(Holmes 1998: 110).

Individual identities are, therefore, seen as being:

“...chameleon-like – changing his or her spots to fit into and make a contribution to changing management teams and structures, and the different skills and attributes their academic and other colleagues bring to the table ...”
(Holmes, 1998: 112)

Although individuals may feel that they are involved in management activity, therefore, they do not necessarily wish to make this explicit. At a national level, for instance, the two major professional groupings in the UK, the Association of University *Administrators* and the Association of Heads of University *Administration*, continue to display a reticence about changing their titles. This is in contrast, for instance, to an equivalent body in Australia, the Association of Tertiary Education *Managers*, although conversely, in the United States, the term ‘Administration’ retains a sense of policy-making at the highest level. This equivocation on the part of professional staff in the UK about their self-identity,

whereby ‘management’ activity is camouflaged by ‘administration’, indicates a sensitivity as to what ‘management’ might mean and how it might be construed in a higher education context, and is a central issue for the study. The reticence of professional staff to identify themselves as managers also lends some support to the claim that in higher education there is “a highly resilient anti-management culture – even amongst managers” (Archer, 2005: 5).

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the difficulties that arise from a perceived shift from administration to management and, in particular, to ‘harder’ forms of management associated with the introduction of a stronger market orientation at sector and institutional levels. Such difficulties may have contributed to the continued use of ‘administration’ as a camouflage for ‘management’, and to the ongoing ambiguities and uncertainties surrounding the identities of professional staff.

It is suggested, therefore, that ‘administration’ and ‘management’ fall short in providing a comprehensive description of the activities of professional staff in contemporary institutions, for instance in relation to opportunities that exist for them to create new forms of professional space at the boundaries of activity. As will be shown in the next chapter, the increasing adoption of the collective term ‘professional staff’ suggests that institutions, and the staff within them, are seeking a fuller perspective on professional identities, which extends beyond both ‘administration’ and ‘management’.

3: PROFESSIONALS AND PROFESSIONALISM

Introduction

This chapter considers how the concept of professionalism might supplement the perspectives offered by ‘administration’ and ‘management’ as markers of identity for professional staff. It suggests that, despite an ongoing process of professionalisation that has sought to establish common knowledges and standards for practitioners as a collective, this is to some extent in tension with a diversifying workforce. Thus, ‘ideal’ forms of professionalism begin to appear restrictive in relation to the attributes required to deal with increasingly unpredictable environments as described, for instance, by Hassan (2003) and Urry (2003), as well as more permeable organisational structures and boundaries, all of which add to institutional complexity. Although the emergence of new forms of professionalism has been noted in the wider literature, these do not fully capture the mobility of individuals in higher education as they work in increasingly fluid conditions, and as they construct new knowledges and relationships that will not only address current demands, but also contribute to the development of their institutions for the future.

‘Professionalism’ and beyond

The fact that other terms are being adopted as descriptors for the collective identity of professional staff, in particular, “professional services” (Lambert, 2003: 94), reflects a sense of the difficulties surrounding ‘administration’ and ‘management’ noted in chapters one and two. It also reflects the process of professionalisation that has occurred, for instance, in moves to codify a body of knowledge associated with professional staff in higher education (Allen and Newcomb, 1999); the establishment

of a Code of Professional Standards promoting an “integrated set” of core values and characteristics (AUA, 2000; Skinner, 2001); and the establishment of dedicated qualifications and development programmes such as the AUA Postgraduate Certificate (AUA, 2004; Carrette, 2005). Other such dedicated programmes include, for instance, the MBA in Higher Education Management run by the University of London Institute of Education, and the Universities Leading Edge Programme run by the University of Southampton.

Such initiatives represent external markers through which individuals might build professional credibility, and reflect the concept of the “ideal type” of professional (Eraut, 1994: 1) deriving from the major professions, such as medicine. These are centred round access to a pre-defined body of knowledge via an accreditation process established by a self-regulating professional association. Upon qualification, and subject to ongoing checks by their peers, the professional has significant autonomy and discretion over this knowledge, which can be updated via reflexivity and accredited development activity (Eraut, 1994; Schon, 1995). This idea of professionalism also specifies norms of behaviour associated with the way expertise is delivered and, as part of an unspoken contract of consulting a professional, clients also are expected to conform to certain conventions in which, for instance, the judgement of the professional is not subject to challenge (Eraut, 1994: 5). This notion of professionalism, therefore, implies a controlled, provider-led, environment, with boundaries that clearly separate those who belong to the professional group from those who do not. Nevertheless, it continues to influence groups of workers who seek to legitimise, or re-legitimise, their position in their occupational sector.

However, there is evidence of unresolved tension between this process of professionalisation and the diversification of individual roles in the broad grouping represented, for instance, by the Association of University Administrators. On the one hand, Allen and Newcomb see the establishment of a body of knowledge and a code of practice as a way of reinforcing collective identity for professional staff:

“This increasing fragmentation will militate against a unified administrative service ... unless there is some overarching ethical code, and body of skills and knowledge, which unifies the various specialist groups” (Allen and Newcomb, 1999: 39-40).

On the other hand, the idea of creating a “unified service”, either at institutional or at sector level, appears to sit uncomfortably with the functional diversification that has taken place in relation to the roles of professional staff. The reasons for this are examined below, with particular reference to the spaces, knowledges and relationships with which professional staff are associated.

Professional spaces

‘Ideal’ forms of professionalism imply a relatively structured environment, to which clearly documented bodies of knowledge, procedures, and boundaries relate. However, as assumptions and expectations about institutional purposes have become less settled, working environments have become less contained, externally and internally. This has resulted from, for instance:

- Increasing pressure on institutions to make a socio-economic, as well as an intellectual, contribution to society (Scott, 1995; Readings, 1996; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Blake, Smith and Standish, 1998).
- Competition from other knowledge providers, including the world wide web, which has removed universities' monopoly status (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow, 1994; Scott, 1995; Urry, 1998, 2003; Ohmae, 1992; Castells, 2000).
- The effects of globalisation, opening up international markets, and the rapid transfer of information between them (Ohmae, 1992; Urry, 1998, 2003; Barnett, 2001; 2003; Hassan, 2003).
- More knowledgeable consumers, who seek provision that suits their needs, rather than those of the provider (Ritzer, 1996; Parker and Jary, 1995).
- Less deference in society towards professionals as knowledge providers (O'Neill, 2002; Sennett, 2004).

All these changes present a less secure framework than hitherto for institutional activities and for those of professional staff.

One practical effect of these changes is at the boundary between practitioners and clients in that, traditionally, clients are expected to enter the practitioner's space, such as a doctor's surgery, to obtain a consultation. In contemporary environments, however, the practitioner would be expected increasingly to enter client space, for example, in the community. In higher education institutions, practitioner space might be represented traditionally by a registry office, or a senior management suite. However, professional staff involved in developments such as outreach and business

partnership would be as likely to talk to clients in, for instance, secondary schools or a regional development agency.

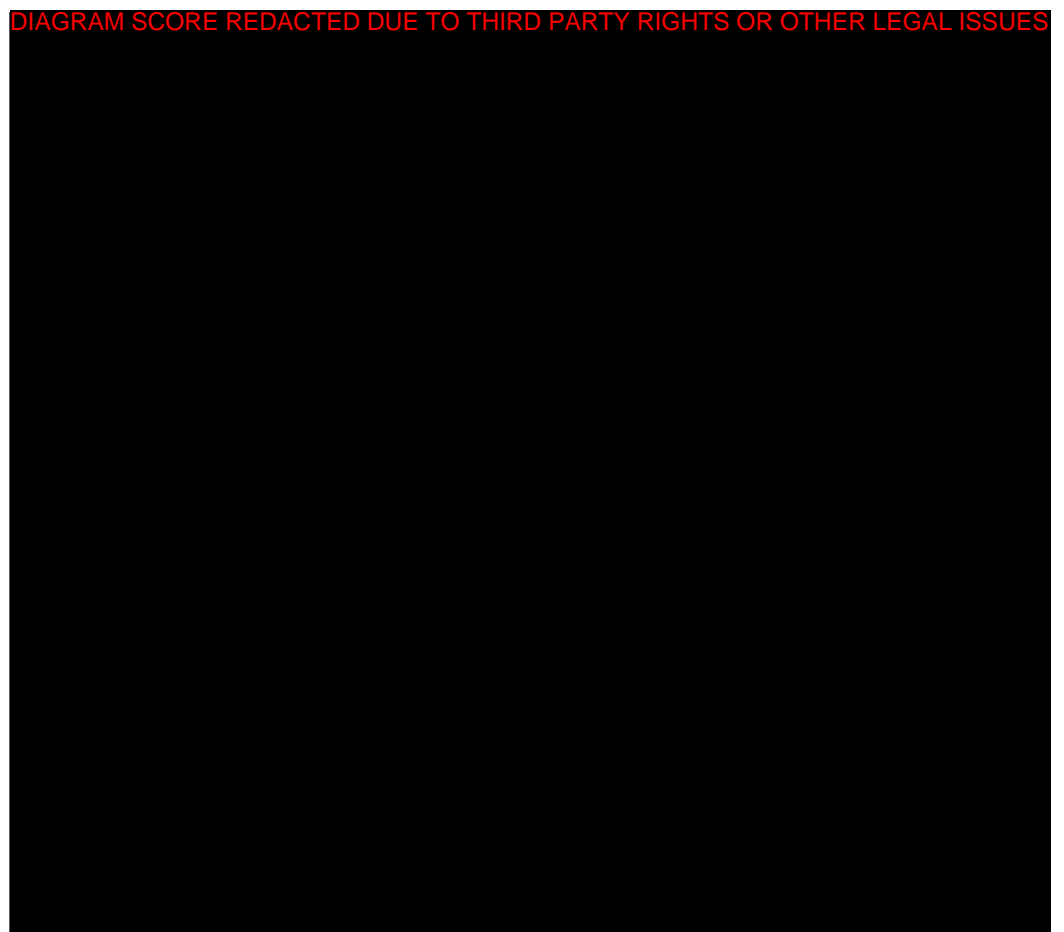
In response to changing conditions, internal management responsibilities have also become dispersed, as both professional and academic managers have become more accountable for the performance of their departments. Rigid structures, as represented in organisation charts, have been overlaid by team-oriented approaches, as broadly based, extended projects, such as widening participation and business development, have required joint input from different specialist areas and staff. The result of these changes for institutional shape reflects the suggestion that:

“the university of the future will be as much (perhaps more) ‘distributed’ than ‘core’” (Scott, 1997: 13).

In this situation, both internal and external boundaries become more permeable. Employees of partner organisations may work within institutional boundaries, and university employees may work elsewhere (for instance the NHS, overseas campuses and regional partners). Some areas of activity have a loose, or no direct, connection to the senior management team. Central functions such as finance, human resources and the estate represent an overlapping resource package, as decisions about one increasingly impact on others. Areas of work such as widening participation or marketing, which would have originated in an established functional area such as admissions or external relations, become detached with budgets of their own. Thus, the organisational structures associated with academic administration and devolved management (Figures 2 and 3, pages 52 and 54), have been overlaid by more fluid

organisational arrangements, described as 'The Inside-Out University' in Figure 4, (Whitchurch, 2004):

Figure 4: The 'Inside-Out University'



Although regulatory tasks associated with academic administration continue to occur, they are likely to be subsumed within a more customer-oriented student services office; and although departmental managers would remain responsible for functions such as planning and budgeting, they would be likely, also, to have membership of

cross-functional groupings working on projects associated with institutional development, such as a communications strategy or bid for capital funding. The functions of interpreting and translating, latent in traditional administrative roles such as minute writing, and management roles such as data analysis, come to the fore in major projects requiring multi-functional input, such as the construction of a new research facility or the opening of a remote campus.

Professional knowledge

The centrality of an exclusive knowledge base for claims to professionalism, and the legitimacy associated with this, is highlighted by Eraut (1994):

“The power and status of professional workers depends to a significant extent on their claims to unique forms of expertise, which are not shared with other occupational groups, and the value placed on that expertise” (Eraut, 1994: 15).

Eraut makes a distinction between two broad categories of knowledge, “process knowledge” and “propositional knowledge”. The former involves the “deliberative processes” of acquiring, assimilating and interpreting information in ways that are relevant to the specific organisational locale. In a university context this could include, for instance, case law and precedent in relation to student appeals; or the creation and updating of an office manual detailing the annual cycle of procedures for the delivery of courses in a school or faculty. Such knowledge accrues primarily through custom and practice, and is associated with the maintenance of the institution as an organisation (for instance, in meeting regulatory, legislative and technical requirements). There is a sense, therefore, in which it is retrospective, and associated more with the characteristics of administration than of management.

“Propositional knowledge” is represented by “discipline-based theories and concepts ... generalisations and practical principles” that can be applied to particular decisions and actions (Eraut, 1994: 103). This type of knowledge is increasingly likely to be represented, for instance, by the establishment of an evidence base, such as student recruitment or staff employment trends, to assist with decision-making. As the institutional plan replaces procedure manuals as the prime reference document, therefore, the shift from administration towards management described in chapter two could be seen in terms of the replacement of “process knowledge” by “propositional knowledge” as the legitimating discourse for institutional decisions. While the former emphasises the maintenance of stable processes, the latter emphasises the construction of an evidence base for choices and decisions.

This change is demonstrated, for instance, by approaches to the recording of decisions. On the one hand, minute writing ensures a correct record of debate, although it may also help to make sense of what was meant rather than what was said:

“a set of minutes ... need not merely encapsulate a somewhat roundabout discussion, but can, in its ordering, summation, articulation, and conceptualisation of context, issues, themes, possibilities, and points, actually *advance* the conversation” (Barnett, 1993: 187).

Nevertheless, this type of detailed account is essentially retrospective. Notes of meetings in contemporary institutions are more likely to comprise a series of action points geared to future options and outcomes, informed rather than justified by the discussion, to take account of changing circumstances.

As part of a process of professionalisation, efforts have been made by practitioners themselves to define a body of knowledge, including, for instance, national policy and funding requirements; legal, quality, environmental, regional and international frameworks; institution-specific knowledge; and key skills such as communications, application of number, information technology, working with others, self-learning and problem-solving (Association of University Administrators (AUA), 2004). These listings are influenced by the literature on professional competence (for instance, Barnett, 1994), and incorporate both “process” and “propositional” knowledge.

However, in a more dynamic knowledge environment, it has been suggested that, rather than comprising fixed elements, the components of any knowledge field are continuously reformulated, so that contemporary knowledge becomes like a living organism:

“[The core] is not fixed, a hard dead core, unchanging and unchangeable. So, openness to a greater variety of traditions is a way constantly of reactivating the creativity of the core” (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001: 259).

Therefore, as “knowledge” has become “knowledges” (Barnett, 2000b) that reconfigure themselves, the presence, and legitimacy, of a single body of knowledge, which is likely to remain relevant for significant periods, becomes less plausible. So too does the value of accumulated or retrospective knowledge. Staying at the edge of developments, such as new government funding regimes, or local regeneration policies, becomes the priority, while the maintenance of records, systems, or even databases, however accurate, increasingly falls short as a marker of professional identity.

The assimilation and integration of different sets of knowledge for a new academic initiative such as a research facility are likely to require contributions from colleagues in a number of functional areas, such as human resources, finance, estates and facilities, as well as the academic discipline concerned. It may also involve partner organisations, such as the NHS or a Regional Development Agency, all of whom need to be persuaded to tell the same story when presentations and negotiations take place with external funding agencies or donors. Thus, political knowledge, including awareness of competitor activity, is another component of the overall knowledge base, in that it may be important to be seen to make a bid, even if a positive outcome is unlikely.

In the contemporary university, therefore, rather than relying solely on knowledge legitimated by accretion, precedent, or the accuracy of quantitative data, there are signs that professional managers are also developing applied, “Mode 2” knowledge that is “a mixture of theory and practice, abstraction and aggregation, ideas and data” (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow, 1994: 81). It has a “pragmatic edge” (Barnett, 1997: 171), reflecting a stronger interaction between institutions and with the environment, and “the symbiosis between academic, theoretical knowledge, and practical ‘lived’ experience in the real world” (Taylor, Barr and Steele, 2002: 135). For individuals, and their careers, this movement in respect of professional knowledge also reflects wider changes in the workplace whereby a person’s credibility increasingly relates to their latest construction or application of knowledge. While they may also have a basis of propositional knowledge, this is only relevant insofar as it can be refreshed in accordance with

current requirements, which are not likely to remain current for a significant length of time.

The significance of up-to-the-minute knowledge can be illustrated in relation to competition for research stars, whose recruitment may be critical to the development of an institution's profile. Such knowledge might include, for instance, an awareness of the value of state-of-the-art scientific facilities offered by a competitor, and the feasibility of matching these. It therefore means being able to offer expertise that goes beyond, for instance, the preparation of a plan for refurbishing a laboratory in response to a given specification. The attempt to define a body of knowledge for professional staff, therefore, might be usefully reinforced by the inclusion of more pragmatic and interactive forms of knowledge, combining elements of both "process" and "propositional" knowledge, and oriented, for instance, towards an understanding of market environments. Such knowledge would reflect what Eraut (1994) and Friedson (2001) term an "elite" form of professionalism, going beyond mere technical competence as represented by "standard" forms. It might also assist in countering the view that professional staff are "purveyors of what academics would regard as generic or relatively low level knowledge" (Henkel, 2000: 252).

Both "process" and "propositional" knowledge reflect a need to construct reference points and boundaries to cope with conditions of uncertainty, reinforcing the "rules and resources" (Giddens, 1991) offered by institutional structures and systems, whereby judgements and decisions might be based on known practice and experience of what has worked in the past. These types of knowledge are reflected in, for

instance, regulatory systems of assessment, annual cycles of programme review, and institutional databases of staff and students, and they aim to provide a measure of control and predictability. However, as the academic knowledge environment is redrawn, this kind of knowledge base might be seen as reflecting organisational approaches of “...high modernity with its unshakeable belief in planning... and predictability”, and “simple cause-effect relationships, often embodying implicit assumptions about their underlying linearity” (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001: 5). Such approaches, by seeking to define and control operating conditions, may be less effective in dealing with rapid change. Although this type of knowledge is likely to remain as a management tool, therefore, the wider literature on knowledge suggests that it is being supplemented by other ways of working.

Thus, the concept of “Mode 2” knowledge, described in, for instance, Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow, 1994; Barnett and Griffin, 1997; Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001, offers a way of describing the contribution of professional staff to the development of institutional knowledge. Rather than being fixed or contained, this more fluid form of knowledge is always incomplete, and is constructed via an ongoing process “that needs to be worked out again and again in each concrete situation” (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001: 249). Furthermore, contexts are re-made through the agency of those constructing the knowledge, so that they are not simply working within inherited or given frameworks. Thus, “spreading” strategies are used to cope with uncertainty, reduce risk and provide a choice of options, leading to:

“The growth of multi-disciplinary identities, the emergence of ‘trading zones’, the development of multi-task teams...” (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001: 252).

In universities, these “trading zones” might include project areas such as partnership, enterprise, and marketing, where dedicated expertise has been grown both within individual institutions and across the sector. Furthermore, “Mode 2” knowledge itself “is an open system in which ‘producers’, ‘users’, ‘brokers’ and others mingle promiscuously” (Scott, 1997: 22). This leads to a situation in which those developing institutional knowledge need to be able to build a variety of relationships, and sustain:

“intensive (and continuous) interaction between results and their interpretation, people and environments, applications and implications” (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001: 258).

This knowledge is, therefore, “transdisciplinary” (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001: 246-7), subject to revision through its contextualisation within the environment. “Local” knowledge (Scott, 1997) becomes as significant as context or strategy, so that:

“... boundaries between the cognitively worthy and less or (un-)worthy ... have become difficult to identify” (Scott, 1997: 20).

Professional relationships

On the one hand, devolved responsibility for budgets and planning to faculties and schools may be seen as reinforcing control by senior management teams in Clark’s “strengthened steering core” over those in the “extended developmental periphery”

(Clark, 1998), although in this scenario, senior managers are seen as being at the centre of institutional relationships rather than at the top of an organisational hierarchy. In this scenario, Clark suggests that administrative “civil servants” have been replaced by “bureaucrats of change” (Clark, 2004, 86), and that a “we-they gap” continues to exist in their relationship with academic staff (Clark, 2004: 84).

On the other hand, there is also evidence of lateral relationships emerging between academic and professional staff, for instance via collaborative team working on projects of a limited time span, and also on more broadly based projects, such as student support and welfare, human resource development and business enterprise (Whitchurch, 2006a). Although changes that this may bring to the nature of the relationship between professional and academic staff have not been fully explored, there is beginning to be recognition of a less clear definition between the two groups:

“What is often forgotten is that over the past few years there has been increasing traffic across the administrative-academic divide. Some academics move into administration, and many administrators have higher degrees” Bassnett (2004: 3).

Thus, the “we-they gap” noted by Clark (2004: 84) may be becoming less pronounced, and issues about the “marginalisation” or “mainstreaming” (Gornall and Thomas, 2001) of professional staff less relevant. For instance, Slaughter and Rhoades suggest that professional staff are “experiencing the same pressure and internal shift of orientation that academics are experiencing in terms of the commodification of research and education” (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004: 295). As

a result, these authors perceive an increasing alliance between professional and academic staff in dealing with the challenges arising from changes in institutional environments.

At a one-to-one level, two empirical studies show variability in relationships between professional and academic managers, in a faculty setting McMaster (2005), and in relation to research management (Shelley, 2006). McMaster (2005) examines what she terms the “diarchy” of administrative and academic domains, in relation to faculty deans and managers, in four different types of Australian university. She identifies three forms of relationship: “nested” (47% of pairs), “conjoint” (41% of pairs) and “segmented” (12% of pairs). The first two represent different types of partnership, and the “conjoint” partnership, particularly, reflects a move to more flexible working arrangements. The McMaster study suggests that, within traditional institutional arrangements of deans and faculty managers, individuals are moving around administrative, management and academic domains.

Shelley (2006) reviewed relationships between research managers and research directors in two institutions, in which the centralised research offices were:

“ ... in the process of refocusing their work to move away from a reactive role to one which was more pro-active and developmental ... away from being seen as simply an administrative support function ... Research management became more professionalized and this moved research managers’ traditional positioning within the university and arguably challenged academic/research support boundaries” (Shelley, 2006: 5-6).

Drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1988; 1993), Shelley demonstrates that “boundaries and spaces for research managers are radically changing and evolving”. However, the positioning of individuals depends on the social and symbolic capital available to them, such as the opportunity to network with academic colleagues. Thus, whereas one research manager was seen as a full team member in developing a collaborative bid, crossing academic boundaries, another “accepted without questioning” the role of “silent secretary” on the research committee.

Thus, fixed relationships and reporting lines, while they may continue to exist in organisation charts, may be becoming less significant in day-to-day working than networks that offer “collaborative norms, horizontal communication, linkages, and temporary forms of structure” (Sporn, 1999: 72; and also Castells, 1997; Henkel, 2005). Such networks, built on an ongoing basis over the longer term, may need to be activated at short notice, for instance, to achieve a deadline in putting forward the strongest possible bid to a funding body. Furthermore, such networks increasingly include external partner organisations, such as the NHS or a regional development agency.

There are, therefore, signs that movements are taking place in relationships between professional and academic staff. Interactions characterised by partnership and joint working are emerging, although these are not even or consistent, either within institutions or across the sector. Furthermore, it is beginning to be recognised that a loosening of boundaries between professional territories may be increasingly critical to the delivery of academic agendas:

“ ... enhancing collaborative teamwork between classes of workers (administrative, professional, academic, technical) is one side of new management. It is required by and grows with the external networking on which universities depend to play a useful and sustainable part in networked knowledge societies” (Duke, 2003: 54).

New forms of professional

Aspects of professionalism, such as the affirmation of knowledge and standards of competence, are likely to continue be sought by, and to define, professional staff. However, the conditions described above suggest that more adaptive forms will be needed to take account of the mobility required in “increasingly complex, multi-disciplinary professional service organisations” such as universities (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997: 53). Despite the restrictions of a small sample, noted in chapter one (page 27), the Dearing Report (1997), in its Appendix 4, gave preliminary recognition to the emergence of “new professionals”, as individuals who were developing new forms of expertise, which were likely to give them the mobility to move in and out of higher education.

Likewise, Middlehurst and Kennie note the emergence of “a new professionalism”, characterised by client partnership, inter-professional relationships, innovation, creativity, project and team working, in which “technical and theoretical expertise is no longer sufficient to establish authority and status” (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997: 59). Gornall (1999, 2004) and Gornall and Thomas (2001) also use the term “new

professional” to refer to staff in teaching and learning support roles, particularly those involved with information technology.

New dimensions to professionalism have been picked up in the wider literature, particularly in relation to the creation of a more market- and customer-oriented environment in the public sector. Friedson (2001: 12) differentiates between “bureaucracy”, where the autonomy of professionals is tempered by the state or organisation, and the “market” where the dominant influence is that of the consumer. Professional staff in higher education might be said to have moved from a situation where they are not only responding to the bureaucratic requirements of the state, such as accountability regimes, and of institutions, such as regulatory processes, but also to the needs of the student as customer, for instance via the creation of one-stop shops for enquiries. However, there are indications that they are doing more than this, in making their own, more active contribution to their institutions, for instance, by initiating developments such as outreach events for local schools, publicity about activities in their specific locale, and presentations to colleagues on immediate issues.

New forms of professionalism raise issues, also, about the relationship between professional activity and management, as noted in relation to, for instance, the NHS and legal professions (Ferlie, Ashburner and Fitzgerald, 1995; Middlehurst and Kennie, 1995). For the purposes of the present study, this translates into ways in which managers themselves can be regarded as professionals. In asking “are managers the new professionals?” Broadbent, Dietrich and Roberts (1997: 9) suggest that “new professionalism” implies a closer interaction with employing organisations,

“requiring a shift in previous professional practice towards accepting organisational identity and change” (Broadbent, Dietrich and Roberts, 1997: 10). This corresponds with ideas about the contribution that professional staff might be making to the development of their institutions. For instance, in a US context, Rhoades (1996; 1998) identifies a category of staff that he describes as “managerial professionals”, who have emerged as a distinctive grouping on the basis of knowledge they hold, that is dedicated to the development of their institutions for the future.

Beyond ‘professionalism’

Professional staff, therefore, face the challenge of constructing strategies that are not only credible at any point in time, but can also be adjusted in the light of unforeseen perturbations:

“The most difficult task facing university leaders in the twenty-first century will be how to reconcile the university’s increasingly open intellectual engagement with its enveloping environment(s) and its need to retain normative focus and managerial coherence” (Scott, 2000: 203).

This means that the type of professionalism offered by these staff might be described as continually under construction or in progress:

“University administrators are in general not in a settled and ‘comfortable’ position. Their functions and roles seem to be continuously negotiated and defined” (Gornitzka and Larsen 2004: 469).

A key aspect, therefore, rather than being set tasks or procedures, is more likely to be at a conceptual level: “stay[ing] attuned to multiple environments ... sustaining

institutional legitimacy ... functioning as interpreters” (Gumport and Sporn, 1999: 128 -131).

The “ideal type” of professionalism, therefore, begins to appear restrictive in contemporary environments, which give rise to increasingly complex conditions for professional staff, involving “a multiplication of relevant features, such that they escape anything approaching a complete understanding” (Barnett, 2003: 24). In elaboration of Barnett’s list (Barnett, 2003: 184-5), the following are examples of such complexities:

- A shifting student profile, in terms of age, academic background, modes and periods of study.
- A shifting staff profile in terms of disciplines offered and the contractual arrangements available.
- Multiple income streams involving negotiated and contractual relationships with both public and private funding agencies.
- Multiple resources, including manual, technical, professional and academic staff; physical estate and facilities (laboratories, hotel and conference facilities, sports and arts centres); sophisticated scientific and laboratory equipment; land holdings, leases and investment portfolios.
- A requirement for ever-higher standards of provision, not only of programme delivery, but also with respect to, for instance, libraries and information technology, catering and residences, entertainment and social facilities.
- Increasingly detailed specifications with respect to, for instance, health and safety, employment legislation and risk management.

These complexities, in turn, give rise to tensions that are “supercomplex”, in that they “do not *and cannot* yield any definite solution” (Barnett, 2003: 34). Examples might include, for instance:

- Imperatives to construct an evidence base for decision-making, using tools such as data management and sensitivity analysis, against an environment in which ‘rational’ approaches to decision-making cannot offer the security that might be expected of them.
- Increasing non-linearity in the relationship between the past and the future, so that past performance, on which assumptions might be made, cannot be relied upon as a predictor for the future.
- Multiple timescales for activity, for instance long timescales for the development of online learning or research programmes that are concurrent with ongoing and immediate demands on time, such as email or face-to-face support for students from non-traditional backgrounds. The same may be true for single projects: although the deadline for a particular bid may be short, there can be months or even years of internal and external negotiations, trade-offs and incentive building before a contract is finally signed.
- Pressures on institutions to collaborate and compete with each other at the same time, for instance when applying for funding and partnership initiatives.
- Resource imperatives to adopt cost-effective, generic solutions to cope with a larger number of students, at the same time as providing individual solutions that will suit particular cases in a more diverse student body.

- Increased functional specialisation to meet, for instance, the requirements of legislative, audit and market demands, at the same time as the emergence of broadly based, extended projects such as student support and enterprise partnership, that require a range of professional expertise.

In rapidly changing environments, therefore, institutional knowledge, as well as deriving from organisational processes, systems and databases, that “[carry] the aura of certainty associated with established ... disciplines ...” (Eraut, 1994: 15), involves an understanding of multiple sets of circumstances, working with “problem nets” (Barnett, 1997: 172) in more fluid “frames of knowing” Barnett (2000b: 416). In these circumstances, systematic approaches to planning and decision-making, such as the use of critical path analysis, become less effective in understanding an environment described by one commentator as “our disturbingly precarious present” (Watson, 2003: 4). Tools and techniques that might be expected to supply evidence with which to make decisions fall short, deliberations become “abbreviated”, and risks increase:

“thinking-in-action is very close to a form of gambling, using snippets of information as one would chips in a casino. If one makes the right choice in, say, ... an investment decision in Canada to open a new university campus in Indonesia, using the market itself as the benchmark for truth or validation, then you may be extremely successful or you may get badly burned” (Hassan, 2003: 140).

Changes in the knowledge environment, therefore, raise the possibility that the future for professional staff may lie in becoming “ ‘leading-edge’ professionals [who] develop new knowledge in practice ...” (Eraut, 1994: 9), so that knowledge is not only accumulated, but also continuously interrogated and reconstructed in relation to new requirements. In such roles they help to provide a new kind of institutional knowledge, which is used both to build ongoing institutional capacity and to develop the institution for the future. New forms of professionalism, therefore, are likely to have a more active orientation, whereby individuals build a portfolio that is unique to them (Whitchurch, 2004; 2006b), leading to:

“the replacement of ‘bureaucratic’ careers by flexible job portfolios” (Scott, 1997: 7).

These kinds of developments suggest that spaces and knowledges are emerging for professional staff that are not necessarily contained within formal job descriptions or titles, and may be continuously under construction as individuals build their portfolio. Thus:

“the job of senior managers, while retaining earlier responsibilities, has gradually shifted over the past decades from managing internal resources to managing the boundary... managers in higher education are beginning to operate in similar mode. They must become active partners in a very complex knowledge producing game. A crucial element in this game is the ability to move back and forth between environments, which are at one moment collaborative and at another competitive” (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow, 1994: 65)

Arising out of these conditions, there could be said to be two, sometimes competing, legitimacies at work in the lives of professional staff: one driven by an imperative to provide certainty and boundaries by which the institution might be understood, the other to accommodate and to work with more fluid environments in the development of their institutions for the future. These two pathologies provide a starting point for consideration of how professional staff are creating new spaces, knowledges and relationships, and the legitimacy challenges thereby created. If, for instance, “ideal” forms of professionalism are seen as the only domains that professional staff might legitimately occupy, then their association with new forms is likely to be contested, and there is potential for further legitimacy tensions to arise.

Conclusion

The changing higher education environment suggests that static views of professionalism, although they may offer a sense of collectivity to professional staff, do not adequately capture their diversity as a group, their spatial mobility, or the new knowledges and relationships that they are creating. While allowing for the exercise of autonomy, and even creativity, ‘ideal’ concepts of professionalism tend to place these within prescribed boundaries offered by, for instance, established bodies of knowledge and codes of standards, which are conferred on a collective grouping.

Thus, new forms of professionalism are emerging which are contingent not only upon the given frameworks in which activity takes place, but also upon the agency of the individual. The relationship between organisational structures and professional identities becomes an iterative process, by which individuals not only enact the roles

conferred on them, but also adjust and reconstruct these roles. The fluidity of boundaries represented by the 'Inside-Out University' (page 65) has facilitated this agency in the building of knowledges and relationships both inside and outside the university. Thus, the situation is more complex than a simple shift over time from administration to management, and a stronger sense of professionalism. However, the multi-dimensional nature of these movements has not been fully conceptualised or made explicit. The next chapter, therefore, will turn to the concept of identity, to consider how it might extend the perspectives offered by 'administration', 'management' and 'professionalism'.

4: THE POSSIBILITIES OF 'IDENTITY'

Introduction

Chapters one to three have shown how the terms 'administration', 'management' and 'professionalism' fall short in providing sustainable understandings of professional staff. In this chapter, the concept of identity is reviewed as offering a more dynamic framework with which to capture movements that are taking place as these staff are recontextualised in complex environments, characterised by more fluid structures and boundaries, internally and externally, and by project- and team-oriented approaches to institutional activity.

A social realism approach to identity, incorporating the concept of structuration (Giddens, 1991; Archer, 2000), is reviewed as a means of achieving a fuller account of professional staff activity, by considering the agency that individuals adopt in relation to their roles, and to the structures and boundaries that they encounter. This approach also enables attention to be given to, for instance, the possibilities that exist for these staff as interpreters across such boundaries, and the implications of multiple identities for an individual. Contemporary views of identity, as an ongoing and open-ended process, therefore, offer a mechanism for exploring underlying movements behind the frames of 'administration', 'management' and 'professionalism', that might not be immediately apparent as professional spaces, knowledges, and relationships are reconfigured.

Understandings of ‘identity’

Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000: 171) describe identity as “the sense of self, of personhood”. The self, in turn, is defined by Outhwaite and Bottomore (1998: 271) as “a distinctively human capacity, which enables people to reflect reflexively on their nature and the social world through communication and language”. Furthermore, identity “always involves both sameness and difference” (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 2000: 171) and “... permanence amid change and unity amid diversity” (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1998: 271). This interplay between fixedness and temporariness, uniqueness and difference, across both temporal and spatial dimensions, is reflected in the way that the concept continues to evolve in the literature, in particular as it is expounded via social realism (for instance, Bhaskar, 1998; Archer 1998, 2000). Such an approach suggests that rather than there being a single, factual reality to be discovered, meanings about any phenomenon are multiple and relative, and can only emerge by understanding the contexts within which the phenomenon is embedded. Thus, it is suggested that the one-dimensional frames of ‘administration’, ‘management’ and ‘professionalism’ may conceal “unobservable mechanisms” (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 2000: 290), and that by penetrating behind these frames, latent aspects and movements in professional identity, which have not been documented previously, may be brought into view.

Identity: from an ‘essence’ to a ‘project’

Essentialist approaches to identity focus on core elements, which provide the distinguishing features of an individual or group of individuals (Giddens, 1991; Henkel, 2000). Taylor describes this view of identity as being “taken on through

shared practices that demonstrate faithful acceptance of given truths” (Taylor, 2008: 29), and Sveningsson and Alvesson describe it as being adopted “through subjection to discourses, identification with social groups and organizational role scripts” (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003: 1168). Thus, identity is associated with a sense of belonging; as something that arises through the sharing of a common history, beliefs or interests; and by sameness rather than difference:

“... constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation” (Hall, 1996: 2).

The term “closure” indicates the significance of there being a defining boundary between those who belong to the group that confers identity, and those outside it.

An essentialist form of identity, therefore, is seen as being singular and all-embracing. In terms of the present study, it could be said to reflect the position of individuals who see themselves as undertaking roles similar to those of others in a wider professional cadre to which they have a sense of belonging. By learning to perform roles in a certain way, in accordance with common practices, they become defined by the structure provided by the role. Thus, professional staff who see themselves as part of an “academic civil service” (Sloman, 1964: 87) or “unified administrative service” (Allen and Newcomb, 1999: 39-40) would be likely to share conventions such as when and how to speak in meetings, reflecting the adoption of a common identity.

However, in order to belong to such a group, and the identity it confers, the individual is expected to subscribe to common expectations and modes of practice, enshrined in a role or roles, defined as “the bundles of socially defined attributes and expectations associated with social positions” (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000: 301). Such social positions may be represented, for instance, in a job description, and carry both “expectations” and “rights and obligations” (Gouldner, 1957: 283). The filling of such a position may lead to “role performance” and “impression management”, as described by Goffman (1990), whereby a “social front” is adopted:

“When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it” (Goffman, 1990: 37).

Gouldner further distinguishes between what he terms “manifest” roles or identities, which are “consensually regarded [by group members] as relevant to them in a given setting” (as in a job description), and “latent” roles or identities, which are not regarded as relevant, but affect formal positionings in an organisation (Gouldner, 1957: 284). Individuals with the same “manifest” role, therefore, may have different “latent” roles, which are likely to affect the way the “manifest” role is performed. His classic account of “cosmopolitans” and “locals”, for instance, distinguishes between the latent roles of the former, who are “low on loyalty to the employing organisation, high on commitment to specialized role skills, and likely to use an outer reference group orientation”, and the latter who are “high on loyalty to the employing organisation, low on commitment to specialized role skills, and likely to use an inner reference group orientation” (Gouldner, 1957: 290).

Thus, while an essentialist view of identity, as described by Hall, above, gives the appearance of precise definition, it takes less account of what happens at the interface between the prescribed, or “manifest”, role and the person performing it, or between the individual and the group that provides him or her with a sense of belonging. It does not, therefore, allow for ways in which an individual might explore, interpret and possibly adapt a role, rather than performing it precisely in accordance with pre-determined guidelines, and the construction that the individual places on the role may be as much part of their identity as the role itself.

Although role and identity are likely, in practice, to be intertwined, it may be helpful, therefore, in order to achieve a fuller understanding of professional staff, to differentiate between the two. As Castells suggests:

“In simple terms, identities organize the meaning while roles organize the functions” (Castells, 1997: 7).

Thus, individuals may distinguish themselves by assigning different meanings and taking different approaches to the same role. This can, for instance, be in a passive way, through “behaviour associated with, and dictated by, incumbency in the positions of social structure”, or more actively through “behaviour emitted in negotiation with self, others’ idiosyncratic needs or utilities, and positional prescriptions” (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1998: 564-565). A person’s role might be seen, therefore, as “the point of interface between the individual person and the larger social structure” (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1998: 564), and the way that they interpret the role contributes to the person’s overall identity.

Essentialist approaches to identity, therefore, have been critiqued in that they imply a fixed state of being, and do not take account of the variability that may occur as a result of an individual's positioning vis-à-vis changing contexts or circumstances:

“An important limitation of essentialism is its articulation through oppositions ... boundaries are firmly fixed ... inter-relationships and ambiguities cannot be accommodated” (Woodward, 2002: 142-143).

Such approaches, therefore, do not take account of changes that may occur over time, or through different experiences, or of the opportunities available to individuals to make choices and, therefore, to influence events. The relationship between individuals, as agents, and their roles, as well as the contexts in which those roles are played out, therefore, may offer additional insights into professional identities.

Other approaches to identity allow for the possibility of growth and maturation, so that identity becomes a process of development, or a “project” (Giddens, 1991; Henkel, 2000). This view sees individuals as capable of working on and modifying their identities throughout life, rather than accepting a fixed inheritance from the circumstances in which they find themselves. It implies choice and will on the part of the individual, and the possibility of influencing events, as well as being moulded by inherited legacies. The “project”, therefore, is constructed on an ongoing basis over both time and space, and involves interaction between the individual and the structures that they encounter, such as a job description or functional location. As a project, therefore, identity becomes something that is dynamic, and contingent upon an individual's positioning vis-à-vis the structural frameworks in which he or she is located. It becomes “Not an essence but a positioning” (Hall, 1990: 5), and arises

from the act of “producing accounts of oneself” (Woodward, 2002: 3-4). Furthermore, it is continually under construction and open-ended and, therefore, never completed.

These two approaches to identity, one comprising essential, given elements, and the other comprising a cumulative project, are linked via a sociological debate about the relationship between individuals and the social structures in which they are located; how far the latter determine, or limit, activity; and to what extent an individual may exercise independent agency. At one end of the continuum is the view that social structures determine the characteristics and activities of individuals (for instance, Althusser, 1966; Durkheim, 1895). At the other end is the view that society (or an organisation) consists only in so far as it is created, and perceived, by individuals (for instance, Abel, 2000; Garfinkel, 1967). Taken to the extreme, a postmodern view would claim that it is impossible to achieve any fixed points or continuity, and, therefore, any structure for activity (Delanty, 2000). However, for the purposes of this study, professional identity will be examined via the interplay of the agency of the individual with the structures and boundaries that they encounter, in particular those relating to professional spaces, knowledges, and relationships.

Linking structure and agency

As suggested in chapters two and three, the study arises from a sense that changes in professional identities are more complex than a single shift from ‘administration’ to ‘management’, or than a process of professionalisation. As well as the diversification of professional staff as a collective, and the construction of individual identity

projects over time, there is a spatial dimension to the changes that are occurring, in that the positionings of individuals are relational in terms of, for instance, functions undertaken, approaches adopted, and relationships formed. There is, therefore, the possibility of mobility across different spaces, be they physical, organisational, or perceptual, so that individuals "... stand in a contingent relation to many aspects of their context" (Sayer, 2000: 121).

An approach linking structure and agency, whereby social structures are seen as being both reproduced and transformed through the practices of individuals and groups of individuals, may assist in providing a more dynamic account of identity (Giddens, 1991; Archer, 2000). This takes account of the influence of structures on an individual, and their capacity to modify, change or re-create these. It therefore relates identity to an individual's positioning at any point in time, allowing for the possibility that this may change according to circumstances. The individual, therefore, is positioned:

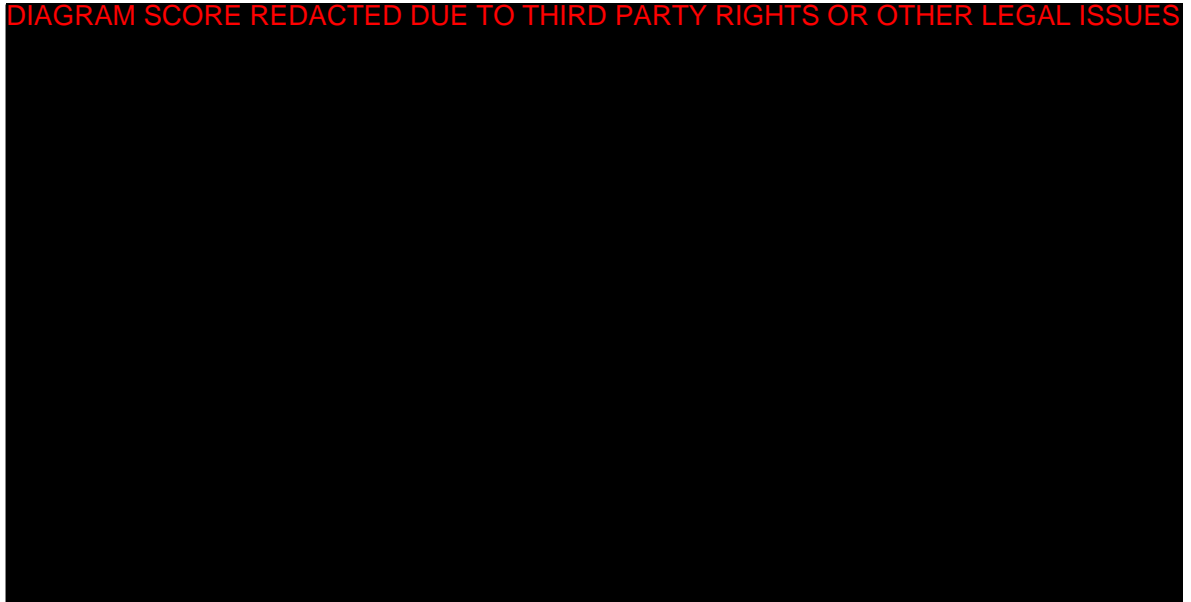
"... between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken' " (Hall, 1996: 6).

Distinguishing between active and response modes, for instance between developmental activity and a reliance on given structures and events, may, therefore, offer a more nuanced perspective on professional activity.

In the context of the present study, the perceived shift from administration to management, noted in chapter two, might be described in terms of a greater emphasis on the individual, as agent, than on the structure provided by their roles. Thus, staff belonging to “academic civil service” or “unified administrative service” cadres might be said to have moved from being what Archer terms “primary agents”, that is “members of collectivities who share the same life chances” (Archer, 2000: 11), finding themselves positioned involuntarily within given structures, to what she terms “actors”, who “acquire their social (*or professional*) identities from the way in which they personify the roles they choose to occupy” (Archer, 2000: 261) (CW’s italics), and therefore through their own contribution to that role.

For Archer, the construction of identity is a cycle of interactions whereby the individual moves from passive to active mode, in dialogue with him or herself, and with the social structures that he or she occupies. The “I” represents the “continuous sense of self” that exists throughout the process of acquiring a social identity, the latter being represented by “you”. The “me” represents the past self, who is involuntarily positioned in society with whatever resources are available, and the “we” represents the collective action undertaken by the self, with others, to acquire social identity. In isolation, however, the “me” has difficulty in influencing the social structures of which it is a part. By interacting with others, the individual strengthens his or her capacity to act, as the “we”. Finally, the “you” emerges as the individual actor, with the ability to produce accounts of, and to, itself, and thus to construct identity on an ongoing basis into the future. This process is illustrated in Archer’s model, shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5: Archer's Model of the Acquisition of Social Identity (Archer, 2000: 295).



In professional terms, the “me”, who represents “the object of society, who is involuntarily either privileged or non-privileged” (Archer, 2000: 11), might be said to represent the initial position of an individual who, on appointment, accepts a role represented by the job description that forms part of their contract. However, he or she only achieves professional identity “by assuming a role and personifying it, by investing oneself in it and executing it in a singular manner” (Archer, 2000: 11). The individual’s interpretation of the role, therefore, distinguishes him or her from other individuals with similar job descriptions.

“Collectivities” of primary agents might be comprised of, for instance, individuals who operate within strict role boundaries, such as academic administration, personnel or finance (Whitchurch, 2004). Thus, individuals fulfilling roles such as committee secretary, who gave advice when asked, but did not take the initiative in volunteering information or opinions, were replaced by people who were capable of offering

“unscripted performances” (Archer, 2000: 7), to meet situations for which a precise precedent did not exist. The passive taking of a role involves reproduction of practice, in Archer’s terminology the condition of “morphostasis”, while a more active approach allows for the transformation of practice, which she describes as “morphogenesis”. Thus:

“It is only when the morphogenetic scenario engages ... that collectively Primary Agents can cease to be the largely passive recipients of their positions in the social distribution of life-chances and can begin to play an active part in their shaping” (Archer, 2000: 267).

Acknowledgement of this interplay between structure and agency makes it possible to consider individuals not only as passive recipients of roles that they enact, but also as active agents who create new forms of institutional knowledge and relationships, for instance, around partnership and regional development. In the first instance, they would be agents *of*, for instance, judgements and decisions enshrined in institutional policies. In the second instance, they would have the discretion to make their own judgements and decisions, and thus become their own agents. In practice, however, an individual who is, in Archer’s terms, “personifying” as well as “animating” a role (Archer, 2000: 288), and thus making their own active contribution to it, is likely to be involved in a mix of the two forms of agency.

Identity in a higher education context

In a higher education context, attention has focused principally on academic, rather than professional, identities. Becher’s classic account (1989) views academic identities in terms of knowledge groupings (“territories”) and disciplinary cultures

(“tribes”). However, the second edition of the book (Becher and Trowler, 2001: 81) acknowledges that it is difficult to achieve categorical precision in more fluid, contemporary environments:

“...these properties are not only relative rather than absolute ... their attributions may change over time and space” (Becher and Trowler, 2001: 184).

Nevertheless, by their own acknowledgement, Becher and Trowler fail to take account of the increasing diversity of institutional functions and locations (Becher and Trowler, 2001: 194 and 197), or the implications of these for the development of identity.

Henkel’s major study (2000) explores the concept of academic identity in the context of policy developments such as the research and teaching assessment exercises, using individual career histories to build a collective picture of academic identities. She also considers the relationship of the individual to their discipline and institution as a component of identity. She acknowledges variability in responses to change, (Henkel, 2000: 264), and devises preliminary conceptual categories, such as “idealists” and “pragmatists”. This view of academic identity takes account, for instance, of changes over time, the emergence of new generations of academic staff with different expectations, and the creation of multiple identities for academic managers in increasingly devolved organisational arrangements.

Although Henkel concludes by reflecting that the picture she draws is of a system in transition, it is nevertheless a conservative view, “biased towards stability rather than

change” (Henkel, 2000: 265), drawing out continuities with past traditions and values, rather than working with future possibilities. There is a sense of being on the edge of some kind of transformation, which is not explicitly stated:

“Accommodating new languages and new concepts of inquiry is a provisional strategy, the implications of which may be slow to emerge... They [academic staff] may, however, also exercise their own influence and create substantial long-term change ... the longer-term outcomes are likely to be affected by broader collective changes among the relevant actors” (Henkel, 2000: 264).

The acknowledgement of a “new coalition of interests and values” (Henkel, 2000: 260) hints at some possibilities. Students are cited as one component of this coalition, as being “in some ways more in tune with government policies than were academics” (Henkel, 2000: 260). Scientists, likewise “were seeking to accommodate extrinsic goals and pressure within their own aims” (Henkel, 2000: 263). The current project includes professional staff in the “coalition”. Henkel’s work, therefore, draws attention to areas of activity that would benefit from further exploration, and in her later work this is made more explicit:

“New, as yet ill-defined, categories of actor and task are emerging, and along with them perhaps more scope for individual influence on how roles and relationships develop” (Henkel, 2007: 199).

More recent accounts of academic identity recognise that, in practice, rather than being comprised solely of essential elements, a more credible view allows for self-determination on the part of the individual, and for flexibility and movement in the

way identity is shaped (Delanty, 2008; Taylor, 2008). Thus, identity becomes something that is mobile and fluctuating, as interpretation and negotiation take place according to the situation in which an individual finds him or herself. It is, therefore, situated and contingent, and in that sense might be said to have a provisionality about it. Identities are seen increasingly as being multiple, overlapping and incomplete (Barnett and di Napoli, 2008; Delanty, 2008; Henkel, 2007; Kogan and Teichler, 2007; Taylor, 2008). Thus, Delanty summarises contemporary views of identity as a project that involves:

- “(1) positionality – social actors position themselves in relation to others ...;
- (2) performativity – social actors perform their identities in different ways ...
identities involve action and can be viewed as sets of practices;
- (3) situation in a context;
- (4) ... discursive construction in narratives and other modes of
communication” (Delanty, 2008: 126).

Delanty further highlights the multiple nature of identities, and the fact that “Institutions such as universities do not easily articulate a collective identity” (Delanty, 2008: 126), and Taylor (2008) refers to identities as being “continuously under construction” (Taylor, 2008: 30). These views corroborate the sense, outlined in chapters one to three, that fixed frames of reference no longer do justice to the diversity and complexity of professional staff identities.

Henkel also, in her more recent work, recognises the blurring of internal boundaries that is taking place between different groupings of professional staff:

“Internal boundaries between different occupational groups and functions have become blurred, so that the simple distinction between academic and non-academic work has become less useful” (Henkel, 2007: 199).

However, the precise extent of what is happening in this blurred space is not made clear. Furthermore, a more conservative view, while acknowledging that “simple diarchical assumptions do not hold” (Kogan and Teichler, 2007: 11), nevertheless continues to see each group as having distinct areas of authority and control, so that academic staff:

“... are professionals in academic matters, but amateurs in matters of shaping the university and ... a new group of experts ... are amateurs in academic matters but professionals in shaping the university” (Kogan and Teichler, 2007: 14).

It is the nature of these kinds of boundaries that requires exploration because, in practice, there may be overlap between the spaces occupied, and the institutional knowledges created between, for instance, pro-vice-chancellors with specific portfolios (such as human resources, quality or student affairs), and the directors of those functions.

The concept of identity may assist in achieving a more multi-dimensional account of what it means to be a professional member of staff, as defined in the study, than has been available hitherto, by exploring:

- The response of individuals to the structures and practices they encounter in their institutions.

- The influence that they are able to exert over such structures and practices, and their ability to negotiate their modification or even reconstruction.
- The way that identities are constructed, in spatial contexts that may be ill defined, and as an open-ended project that may never be completed.
- The way that communication takes place across spatial domains, including interpretation between them.
- The emergence of new spaces and discourses as identity is re-shaped, for instance in relation to changing professional knowledges and relationships.
- The existence of multiple aspects to identity, for individuals and for professionals collectively, and the possibility of dissonance arising from this. In this context, it is significant that practitioners often describe themselves as performing multiple roles (for instance, Kiloh, 1994: 9-10; Hamer, 1997: 6).
- The simultaneous conduct of different types of activity, by the same person, at the same time (for instance, activities associated with more than one “hard” and “soft” quadrant of administration and management described in Figure 1 on page 31).

Furthermore, the way that individuals perceive and use organisational boundaries also offers a route into the data collected for the study, and to the categorisation and reconceptualisation of contemporary identities. This mechanism, therefore, may assist in moving beyond ideas of professionalism based on a fixed body of

knowledge, or a linear trajectory of accumulated experience, to describe professionals who display, for instance, mobility between functional areas, and interaction with multiple interfaces.

Conclusion

The terms ‘administration’ and ‘management’, and perceptions of a movement from the former to the latter, as described in chapters one and two, are likely to remain. Professional staff, also, will continue to undergo a process of professionalisation through the various qualifications and development opportunities that are available to them. However, as shown in chapter three, there is evidence that other movements are occurring as new forms of professional emerge, which are not sufficiently explained by the terms ‘administration’, ‘management’ or ‘professionalism’. This chapter suggests how the concept of identity may be helpful in supplementing existing frames by giving a more dynamic focus to new forms of professional that are emerging. These not only involve the collective adoption of greater agency over time, but the re-positioning of individuals, working increasingly across and outwith structural boundaries, for instance between functional areas, between professional and academic domains, and between the university and the external environment.

The following chapter describes the methodology adopted in collecting empirical data for the study, through which the issues raised in chapters one to three, in relation to contemporary professional identities, might be further explored.

SECTION 2: A PROCESS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

5: APPROACH AND METHOD

Introduction

This chapter describes how a qualitative approach was adopted to explore ways in which contemporary administrators and managers construct their professional identities in the context of a changing knowledge environment. Twenty-four middle and senior grade managers were interviewed in three case study institutions, the institutions having been chosen on the basis of the diverse positions they occupied in the higher education system. The interviews aimed to elicit understandings about ways in which individuals construct and use their professional knowledge, the types of relationships they build with academic colleagues, and the professional legitimacies available to them as a result of identity movements occurring around changing knowledges and relationships. Through the empirical work of the study, therefore, the dissonance that was identified in the literature about ‘administration’ and ‘management’ could be explored in more detail in a local context. The data gathered provided a basis for developing understandings about ways in which professional spaces, knowledges and relationships are achieving currency in contemporary institutions.

[**Note:** The first person is used in this chapter to indicate the active participation of the author as researcher in the project that is being described.]

Ethical considerations: researcher as practitioner; practitioner as researcher

Because the project arose from my professional life, the respondents in the study were fellow professionals and colleagues. I was acquainted with the ten heads of administration I interviewed, both in the pre-study interviews and in the case institutions, and a number of the twenty-one other respondents in the case institutions knew of me through my extended professional activities. However, I had not had a direct working relationship with any of the above, nor had I worked in the same employing institution.

As participants in the same higher education system, both researcher and researched were, during the course of the interviews, building common understandings as “sense-makers and knowers” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 27). However, I was also aware that “even in the course of an interview, the researcher’s biography imposes an order on how the social actor [ie the subject of research] understands their life” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 49). My desire to make more explicit identity movements that had not been acknowledged previously was accompanied by an awareness that this could lead to outcomes that were both emancipatory and transformational, in that:

“Communicating a critical understanding of the life world ... may contribute to changes in the socially constructed world” (Kvale, 1996: 52).

This possibility reinforced my own identification with the study, which I saw as making a contribution to the profession and the futures of individuals within it.

Although my ‘professional capital’ was an advantage in gaining access in that no-one declined to be interviewed, and respondents were enthusiastic about sharing their

thoughts around the issues raised, I was aware that difficulties could arise from this, for instance an over-identification with respondents on my part, and the fact that respondents might try to create a favourable impression, or to use the interview as an opportunity to share problems. Because they were colleagues in a well-networked profession, I was also particularly aware of confidentiality issues arising from a limited sample, and the need to protect the identities of my informants. Thus, I had a dual identity during the empirical work, as researcher and colleague, which had to be managed as far as possible to the advantage of both the study and the participants.

A number of mid-level managers wished to discuss the experience of undertaking research in the context of their own careers, and asked to be kept in touch about progress and outcomes of the study, which added a further dimension to some of the meetings. I regarded this kind of discussion as giving something back to those who had spared the time to be interviewed, and to the profession generally. Such discussions were not recorded as part of the interview and the tape recorder was switched off for such 'topping and tailing' elements of the meeting. Thus, although an attempt was made to draw a boundary round the researcher role, which became extended on occasions, my own knowledge could not be entirely "bracketed out" (Scott and Usher 1999: 131).

Research method

Rationale

In order to develop a more comprehensive picture of the professional identities of professional staff than was available in the literature, a qualitative, interpretive study was undertaken, whereby:

“... theory develops from the data which are collected and not by the testing of deductively formulated hypothesis” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 41).

As suggested by Creswell (1994), quoting Morse (1991), a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate when the topic of research is:

“(a) ...‘immature’ due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous research; (b) a notion that the available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; (c) a need exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory” (Creswell, 1994: 146, quoting Morse, 1991: 120).

The lack of empirical studies of the identities of professional staff, or their contextualisation in a theoretical setting, as well as gaps and misunderstandings that appeared to exist in the academic and practitioner literature, suggests that all three criteria (a, b and c) are met in relation to the research topic.

The conduct of the study was, therefore, a multi-layered process, leading to “knowledge formation [that is] iterative and spiral rather than as linear and cumulative” (Scott and Usher, 1999: 227). By generating a description of what was happening *in situ* (that is “what is” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998)), it was hoped to develop indications of directions in professional identity for the future (that is of “what might be” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998)).

Preliminary work

Because the issues arising for professional staff from the changing higher education environment had not previously been addressed in a detailed way, I decided, as an initial step, to take a system-wide view from senior commentators before embarking on the main study. This involved interviews with three Vice-Chancellors and seven heads of administration, and provided a meta-level frame of reference for understandings in the literature, as well as for themes that would emerge from the case interviews. The individuals concerned were drawn from a range of pre-and post-1992 institutions in England and Scotland, and were asked to comment on the following five areas, to obtain a view of understandings about, and expectations upon, professional staff, including:

- Change that had occurred in the roles and identities of professional staff.
- Distinguishing features of their contribution vis-à-vis, say, academic managers.
- The influence of professional staff in decision-making and involvement with risk.
- Their positioning vis-à-vis government policy.
- Understandings about the concepts of administration and management, and the value placed on them.

The heads of administration were also asked to give a biographical account of their own career paths.

I was aware that these interviews might reflect the fact that those in positions of power and influence are likely to:

“... create a public conversation that sets the boundaries of discourse”
(Walford, 1994: 116).

It was indeed the case that these interviews tended to produce ‘public’ accounts, that is:

“sets of meaning in common social currency that reproduce and legitimate the assumptions people take for granted about the nature of social reality”
(Cornwell, 1984: 15).

The commentaries of senior university managers, therefore, reinforced the conclusions of the literature search in that contemporary professional identities tended to be described in terms of the existing frames of ‘administration’ and ‘management’, rather than new understandings being offered. Nevertheless, this first set of interviews provided a backcloth for the second stage of the study, which sought to understand the identities of second- and third-tier managers, at functional director level and below, via more personal or private accounts:

“that spring directly from experience and from the thoughts and feelings accompanying it” (Cornwell, 1984: 16).

Case studies

A three-site case study approach was chosen for the main study, to provide accounts from second- and third-tier staff about ways in which they constructed their professional identities. I had access to gatekeepers in each of three case institutions, which were selected on the basis that they occupied different positions in the higher education system in terms of, for instance, mission, size, history, disciplinary base,

and teaching and research orientation, and I considered that this provided a balanced sample. The three sets of interviews could, therefore, be contextualised against a range of institutional variables. CampusU was a campus university with a balanced teaching and research profile; MultiU was a multi-faculty institution and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive institutions; and NewU was an inner city post-1992 university. This was, therefore, a “purposeful sampling” approach, with cases selected that were likely to “show different perspectives on the problem” and to include “ordinary cases, accessible cases, or unusual cases” (Creswell, 1998). The choice of three very different types of institution would also make it possible to review whether and how individual accounts might relate to the type of institutional setting.

I asked the gatekeepers in these institutions to provide a sample of four second-tier and four third-tier managers, so that the choice of interviewees depended partly on the selection made by the gatekeepers, and partly on practical issues such as availability (Appendix 5). The second-tier staff were people who reported directly either to the head of administration, or to a pro-vice-chancellor, or to the vice-chancellor. They were either permanent members of the senior management team, or invited to meetings when an issue involving them was to be discussed. They also managed teams of staff in their own right. Third-tier managers were a tier below that in the organisational hierarchy. The interviews, therefore, involved senior and middle grade staff on grades 3 to 6 of the Academic-related Staff pay scale in the pre-1992 sector, and on management or senior management grades in the post-1992 sector.

Thus, 72% were on grades equivalent to Senior Lecturer (pre-1992) or Principal Lecturer (post-1992).

Twenty-four respondents, including the head of administration, were interviewed (nine in CampusU, eight in MultiU, and seven in NewU). The staff interviewed worked in a range of functional areas including finance, human resources, student services, external relations, planning, enterprise and data management, and came from different age bands, with a 42:58 male to female gender ratio (Figures 6 and 7). The overall gender balance, including the interviews with the seven heads of administration, was 51:49.

Figure 6: Second-Tier Managers: Age and Gender

	CampusU	CampusU	MultiU	MultiU	NewU	NewU	Totals
Gender Age	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
20-29							
30-39							
40-49	1			1	1	1	4
50-59		2	2		1	1	6
Totals	1	2	2	1	2	2	10

Note: This table excludes the three heads of administration, two of whom were female and in their fifties, and one of whom was male and in his forties.

Figure 7: Third-Tier Managers: Age and Gender

	CampusU	CampusU	MultiU	MultiU	NewU	NewU	Totals
Gender Age	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
20-29		1					1
30-39	1	3		1	2		7
40-49			1	1			2
50-59				1			1
Totals	1	4	1	3	2		11

Figure 8: Second-Tier Managers: Specialisms

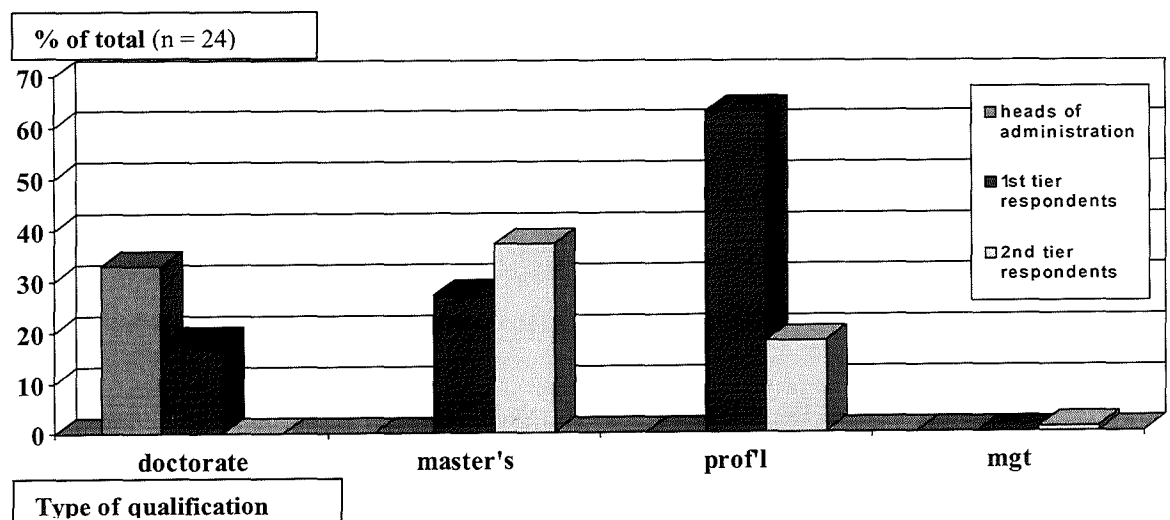
	CampusU	CampusU	MultiU	MultiU	NewU	NewU	Totals
Gender Specialism	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Finance	1		1		1		3
Human Resources		1		1	1		3
Student Services		1	1			1	3
External Relations						1	1
Totals	1	2	2	1	2	2	10

Note: This table excludes the three heads of administration.

Figure 9: Third-Tier Managers: Specialisms

	CampusU	CampusU	MultiU	MultiU	NewU	NewU	Totals
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Specialism							
Human Resources		1					1
Student Services		1		1			2
External Relations	1	1					2
Enterprise				1	1		2
Information Systems					1		1
Departmental Manager			1	1			2
Planning		1					1
Totals	1	4	1	3	2		11

Of the twenty-four people in the site studies, 32% had professional qualifications, such as accountancy and personnel, and 40% had either master's degrees or doctorates (Figure 10):

Figure 10: Qualifications of Respondents

Factual details about interviewees were collected via a proforma circulated in advance (Appendix 7) with an introductory letter, together with job descriptions where available. Information about the institutions was also gathered from publicly available documentation, such as plans, handbooks, annual reviews, and institutional web pages.

Commentary on research method

As the literature review had demonstrated that existing frames were no longer satisfactory to describe contemporary professional identities, a method was needed that illuminated the fact that identities were becoming increasingly complex and multi-dimensional. One-to-one interviews were chosen, which could be analysed on a number of levels: for instance, in terms of a biographical narrative; the degree of structure that characterised an individual's approach to professional knowledge and relationships; and the way that his or her activities were legitimised in their institution. Thus, individual interviews were judged to give the best opportunity to view the multi-dimensional aspects of identity, and the ongoing movements that were occurring in the professional lives of these staff:

“The implicit conceptions of the knowledge produced by interviews converge on the conversational, narrational, linguistic, contextual, and inter-relational features of knowledge” (Kvale, 1996:45).

The study was, therefore, relatively small-scale and fine-grained. The case institution settings represented Guba and Lincoln's (1981: 57) “naturalistic” perspective, in which realities are multiple and divergent, and the relationship between enquirer and

subject is inter-related. Following Hammersley (1998; 1999; 2002), the approach was an exploratory one, to collect detailed qualitative data from a limited number of cases, with analysis focusing on the interpretation of meanings. In Scott and Usher's terms, it had a weak frame and weak focus (Scott and Usher, 1999: 112). Thus, while all the topics in the topic guide were covered in each case, the interviewer exercised a light touch in directing the interview, so that, for instance, the topics might not be dealt with in exactly the same order on every occasion, depending on how the conversation went.

While not an ethnographic study as such, involving total submersion of the researcher in the precise locales in which respondents were situated, it would embrace "ethnographic moments" (Scott and Usher, 1999: 83), for instance through a set of questions around interviewees' career biographies, and through the researcher's field notes on the locations visited. Thus, the aim was to capture "lived reality" (Scott and Usher, 1999: 87) that might be contrasted with more public accounts derived from the literature and from the heads of institution and administration:

"The production of models has to proceed from descriptions of social life by the actors involved, and researchers have to do everything they can to allow social actors to deliver to them authentic accounts of their lives" (Scott and Usher, 1999: 82).

A key consideration in the research design was whether the relationships between, for instance, academic managers (such as pro-vice-chancellors and deans) and professional staff should be explored more fully through additional interviews with

academic managers, beyond the three undertaken with heads of institution. It was decided that, since this was the first study of its type, and there was no earlier empirical work on which to build, its scope would be restricted primarily to the understandings that professional staff had of their identities, including their relationships with academic colleagues. Clearly, however, a further study, including interviews with academic managers and other academic staff, would be an important extension to the work.

Research process

Pilots

In the autumn of 2003 a pilot interview was carried out with a head of administration, and in the spring of 2004, an institutional pilot for the case studies was undertaken in a pre-1992 university, comprising the head of administration, two second-tier managers (Grade 6 finance and student services), and one third-tier business manager (Grade 3). The two pilots enabled a refinement of the main themes and the ordering of the topic guides, and provided an opportunity to develop interviewing skills, particularly the balance of time devoted to each topic, and the facility to move between topics at appropriate points. Neither of the pilots was used to provide evidence in the final study. A proforma, asking for factual information about the case interviewees' careers, was also piloted in the autumn of 2003.

Interviews with Heads of Institution and Heads of Administration

For the interviews with heads of institutions and heads of administration, direct contact was made with the people concerned, explaining the background to the study

and requesting an interview. All those invited to participate agreed. Three interviews were conducted in London, in two cases when the interviewees were attending other meetings there, and two took place out of London when I travelled to other parts of the UK.

Case institution interviews

For the case institution interviews, which were conducted in the spring and summer of 2004, initial contact was made with the head of administration, who acted as a gatekeeper (Appendix 5). Although I was conscious that these gatekeepers would be likely to field staff who would show their institution in a favourable light (this would be true whether or not the researcher was a fellow professional), they provided respondents who in nearly 100% of cases matched the brief, in terms of seniority and background. I interviewed participants on one or more days on each site.

Prior to the interviews, participants from both groups were contacted, and given details of the study via an introductory letter (Appendix 6). At this point, an assurance was given of complete confidentiality and anonymity. They were asked to complete and return a proforma (Appendix 7), giving biographical details, together with a copy of their job description, in advance if possible. The interviews all began with a request for an autobiographical account of interviewees' careers, including key influences and turning points. This led into discussion of the broad themes of the topic guide (Appendix 8), though not necessarily in the same order, in a semi-structured interview. The interviews were tape-recorded, and notes were also taken of

key points. Only one person asked not to be recorded and in that case more detailed notes were taken.

The interview method was refined during the process of the study, as I became more practised at pursuing key points and lines of interest as and when they arose. The interviews all lasted around one hour, which was the time allotted in advance. A note of thanks was sent to each participant by email immediately after the visit. A log was kept of arrangements for both sets of interviews and institutional visits. This included numbers of sites visited, locations of interviews, any difficulties in making the arrangements, interruptions, cancellations, re-arrangements, as well as any distinguishing features of individuals, so that they could be recalled to mind during analysis of their contribution. It also included notes of conversation before and/or after the interview proper.

Conduct of interviews: Heads of Institution and Heads of Administration

The interviews with heads of institution and heads of administration aimed to elicit understandings about movements in professional identities among the staffs for whom the heads had been responsible. Questions were asked about:

- Elements of continuity and change over the past twenty years.
- Involvement with decision-making and risk.
- How they would identify heads of administration of the future.
- Whether the role of head of administration would continue to exist in future.
- Understandings about the terms 'administration' and 'management'.

- Differences between management in universities and other public/private sector organisations.

In the case of heads of administration, information was also sought about the individual's own career path. These questions focused on:

- Motivations that led to a career in university administration and management.
- Critical influences/turning points.
- The nature of their influence as head of administration.
- Relationships with other groupings (such as the senior management team, academic and professional managers, external reference groups).
- What they would do differently if starting their careers in 2004.
- Where they saw themselves going next.

All the respondents had worked in more than one university, and two had been head of administration in more than one, so their range of experience enabled them to make comparisons both over time and across institutions.

Conduct of interviews: Case institutions

In order to establish the "situatedness", or location, of individuals (Scott and Usher, 1999: 28), the themes identified from the literature review and interviews with heads of institution and heads of administration were explored in more detail in the context of the three different institutional locales. The same questions were asked of the heads of administration at the three sites as were asked of those providing an overview of the system, although they were couched more in terms of the local institutional contexts and structures.

At the beginning of the interview, before the tape recorder was switched on, the information in the introductory letter was set in more of a conceptual frame, as I explained that I was trying to build a picture of professional staff in the context of changes that had taken place in universities' operating environments. Examples were given of specific areas of interest, such as understandings about administration and management; about the person's knowledge base and its application; and about the interfaces between professional staff and academic staff generally, between professional staff and academic managers such as deans or heads of department, and between the corporate centre and "academic heartland" (Clark, 1998).

The questions for second- and third-tier managers were divided into two sections, the first seeking information about the individual's own career:

- Motivations that led to a career in university administration and management.
- Critical influences/turning points.
- Broader professional interests.
- Where they saw themselves going next.

The second part of the interview explored the individual's understandings about 'administration' and 'management'; their knowledge base and the way that they used this; their key interfaces and relationships; their involvement in decision-making and risk; and their sources of belonging and allegiance.

During the course of the interviews, a topic guide was followed to steer the discussion (Appendix 8), while giving scope for the exploration of individual pathways, according to the background and experiences of the interviewee. At the

same time as encouraging respondents to develop their lines of thought, I endeavoured to make the conversational approach as systematic as possible, by covering similar themes, while drawing out individual stories to inform those themes.

Although the overarching research questions of the study remained the same, a fluidity in the discussions allowed issues to surface that I had not necessarily foregrounded at the start of the study. Therefore, if thoughts occurred to me during the course of the interviews, adjustments were made for future sessions. An endeavour was made not to foreclose the possibility of surprise, as I was aware that as a practitioner I might subconsciously interpret the data so as to reflect my own experience.

An open-ended interview style was chosen, to enable interviewees to move from giving descriptive to more interpretive accounts. I therefore started with a request for an autobiographical account of their career, and critical events or turning points in it, which would enable respondents to talk about themselves and to think about the development of their careers, before progressing to more reflective questions about motivations, responsibilities, structures and cultures, change and risk, and professional relationships.

Because I was a practitioner in the field of the study, the interviews were with colleagues (whether personally known to each other or not), and the subject matter covered common professional ground, it was anticipated that a conversational, dialogic mode would be the most productive way of sourcing material. Kvale's

notion of the traveller, building up a picture of the territories in which they find themselves, was used as a model for the collaborative construction of knowledge between interviewer and interviewee:

“Through conversations, the traveller [ie the researcher] can also lead others to new understanding and insight as they, through their own story-telling, may come to reflect on previously natural-seeming matters of course in their culture... It is ... a strength of the interview conversation to capture the multitude of subjects’ views of a theme...” (Kvale, 1996: 4; 6).

Conversational give-and-take applied, with the interviewer giving a light steer:

“It often proves best to explain what one is after and let them structure the answer. One would then employ a checklist to make sure that important zones of enquiry or important factual issues are not left out” (Walford, 1994: 71).

The aim was to contain, but not to constrain, the data that might emerge. This would enable the themes of the topic guide to be explored and clarified, as well as other avenues that opened up during the course of discussion. This strategy was a fruitful one, apart from in one instance, where more detailed questioning was needed. In all other cases the topics were covered easily by the natural flow of the discussion.

At the end of each interview respondents were asked if there was anything they wished to add, or whether they felt there were any other questions that should have been asked, before the tape recorder was switched off and a debriefing took place. In a number of cases this opened the door for significant issues, views, or further angles on previous discussion to emerge. As this proved to be a valuable opportunity, in later

interviews I allowed more time at the end for free discussion. In the debriefing, participants were reassured of the anonymity and confidentiality of the session, as well as any published outcomes of the work at a later date. Finally, they were thanked for their time and interest in the project.

Conclusion

The study used qualitative interviews to provide additional perspectives on understandings derived from the literature, the case institutions having been selected to provide as wide a range as possible of locations and professional identities. This method provided a layered view, linking the changing higher education environment, the impact of this on institutions, and the consequences for professional staff identities. The research process was undertaken, therefore, with potential frameworks for analysis in mind, so that identity constructions could be developed through understandings about interviewee approaches to knowledges and relationships in contemporary institutions. Details of the method adopted in analysing the data are provided in the following chapter.

6: CASE INSTITUTIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter begins by describing the three case institutions, CampusU, MultiU and NewU, from where the empirical evidence of the study is derived. It then reviews the process of data analysis in relation to the narrative accounts of twenty-four respondents, and the refinement of a theoretical model to describe movements that, from the data, appear to be occurring in professional identities.

The analysis was approached at three levels: at a factual level, drawing out information about careers and working practices; at a conceptual level, around four main themes of professional space, knowledge, relationships and legitimacies; and at a theoretical level, leading to the development of a typology of *bounded*, *cross-boundary*, and *unbounded* forms of professional identity. The resulting model not only illustrates movements in professional identity over time, but also demonstrates the complexities experienced in particular by those with *cross-boundary* and *unbounded* forms of identity. It also permits exploration of the relationship between the three identity typologies and different types of organisational structure. The chapter, therefore, establishes a framework for the detailed examination of the data in the chapters that follow, and for the understandings that will flow from this.

[**Note:** In order to preserve the anonymity of respondents, in this and subsequent chapters individuals will be referred to in generic terms, for instance, as “managers” or “officers”, regardless of their specific title or seniority. As a general rule,

“manager” would denote a senior role, equivalent to senior lecturer or above, and “officer” a middle management role, equivalent to “lecturer” in terms of pay.]

The case institutions

In order to maximise the view that might be achieved of the different ways in which professional staff construct their identities, both as actors of pre-determined roles and as agents in their own right, three institutional sites were selected with different missions, sizes and histories:

CampusU

CampusU is a campus university on a green field site, with less than 10,000 full-time equivalent students, and a balanced teaching and research profile. It is a member of the 1994 Group of research-oriented institutions with an international research reputation. Because of its relatively small size, it is able to combine a strong central steer with a dialogue with academic staff. Those interviewed demonstrated the existence of a close-knit community, with a cohesive, almost familial culture. This is reflected in the importance attached to informal relationships, for instance by a group of second-tier managers, in their concern about how a new appointee would fit into their team:

“... four of us have been together a long time ... We were slightly wary when ***** came ... because, you always worry about what’s going to happen to that group” (academic administrator).

The university has flat academic and management structures, in which people feel that they have easy access to colleagues, laterally and vertically.

Professional service functions are centralised, with reporting lines to the head of administration, although their offices and staff are geographically dispersed across the campus. The head of administration and director of finance are members of the senior management team, chaired by the vice-chancellor, which meets weekly. There is also a weekly meeting between the senior management team and heads of department, including administrative departments, again chaired by the vice-chancellor. The latter meeting seems to be valued principally as an opportunity for networking, and provides a focal point for well-developed informal communication channels across the boundaries of professional and academic activity.

In a predominantly collegial environment, it was suggested by the head of administration that “[academic staff] were willing to take on board managerial issues”, provided that transparent explanations were given and well-balanced arguments made. For instance, agreement had been reached to close two major science departments because of low recruitment of students, despite acceptable research quality. However, it had been decided that another, less expensive department, could remain since the cross-subsidy to maintain it was not so great as in the case of the science departments. In this instance, account had been taken of both academic and organisational arguments about, for instance, disciplinary strengths, academic shape and the market positioning of the institution, and had led to a decision that was perceived as reasonable across different constituencies of the university.

The university was developing regional campuses and partnership arrangements, including outreach activity and links with local business, and this had challenged accustomed ways of working. These acquisitions had also raised awareness of the need to find ways of overcoming a relative isolation from the local community, which had characterised the university in its earlier years. A number of recent appointments of middle-level professional staff had reinforced this shift of institutional perspective.

The average length of service of staff interviewed from CampusU was 8.5 years. A group of middle managers (Grade 5), who had been there for twenty years or more, had been joined by more mobile higher education professionals, who were alert to other opportunities in the sector and would be likely to move on in due course. The head of administration welcomed this kind of mobility:

“In terms of the development of an individual’s career and the contribution they can make, then I would advocate moving... I think the institution gets the best out of people in five to seven [years]”.

The university’s organisational structures and cultures could be seen to derive from the 1970s model of academic administration (Figure 2 – page 52), but were moving in the direction of the increasingly open institutional model (Figure 4 – page 65). As it had not taken on board the devolved management model (Figure 3 – page 54), this was less relevant to its working practices.

MultiU

MultiU is a multi-faculty institution with around 20,000 full-time equivalent students. It is a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive institutions with medical schools. Its major focus is to preserve its position among the elite, whilst maximising opportunities for the future, such as capturing capital projects from the Science Research Infrastructure Fund (SRIF). It offers a broad range of subjects including medicine, and is characterised by traditional, collegial ways of working across faculties and departments. The management of long lines of communication, therefore, is a significant issue. There was also strong awareness in the senior management team of the need to both maintain collegiality and keep business and management processes up-to-date. New appointments had been made with the purpose of achieving the latter aim.

Academic departments are the primary academic and budgetary units, with heads who are supported by departmental administrators on a range of administrative grades. The latter have a business manager role, with responsibility for managing budgets and teams of staff, although this is not articulated as such either by them or by the institution. They are dispersed across of geographical locations. The head of administration is the only professional manager who is a full member of the senior management team, which consists of the vice-chancellor, pro-vice-chancellors and deans, although other heads of functional sections are invited for items in their area of professional interest.

At the time the interviews took place, a consultation process was underway across the institution about future directions, and responses to the public consultation documents were available on the web. A review was also taking place of professional roles and functions in the centre and the periphery, reflecting the fact that institutional growth had made existing structures somewhat unwieldy for management purposes. The head of administration described the aim of this review as being:

“To look at interfaces... So that we can try and structure... these are the jobs that the centre does, these are the jobs that we expect to be done in departments, and these are the jobs that departments expect faculties to do and vice versa... so we all know what we are expecting”.

An unevenness of practice, as well as a lack of clarity about responsibilities across the institution, had become apparent:

“... on the one hand, ‘we’ve got... information overload’ and on the other hand ‘we don’t get enough information, or we don’t know who’s who’”
(industrial liaison manager).

Even allowing for the fact that such complaints may be typical of large organisations, it would appear that there were boundaries that inhibited the flow of information, despite formal lines of communication, for instance, from the centre to the periphery. Although this might indicate that communication channels needed to be made more flexible, the response seems to have been to reinforce, rather than to relax, organisational boundaries. For instance, one respondent outside the central

administration described the finance office as a “fortress”. Nevertheless, more than one respondent referred to being “lucky” and “happy” to work there.

The average length of service of staff interviewed from MultiU was thirteen years. A long-serving group of staff, who had settled there for twenty years or more, and would be unlikely to move, was interspersed with others who turned over more rapidly. A modernisation agenda had become associated with certain senior managers, and was being rolled out. Thus, the university’s organisational structures and cultures were characterised by remnants of the 1970s model of academic administration (Figure 2 – page 52), overlaid with the 1980s/1990s devolved management model (Figure 3 – page 54).

NewU

NewU is a post-1992 university with just over 20,000 full-time equivalent students, on multiple sites. This created “many university communities” that could be “very parochial and inward-looking” (public relations officer), with local allegiances to campuses rather than to the institution. However, it was also suggested that, because professional managers belonged to functional departments that crossed sites, they were more aware than their academic colleagues of the university as a corporate entity. The ethos and culture were described by a number of respondents as being “business driven” and “managerial”, as well as having a community orientation. Severe resource constraints had led to a recent restructuring programme, from which people still bore scars:

“Management breathed a sigh of relief over that I think, but there was a message there” (enterprise manager).

One message was that the institution, and the individuals within it, would continue to exist at the edge of viability, “working as tightly as human resources as we can” (student services manager). Survival mechanisms were a constant theme, for individuals as well as for their functions. Several informants felt that the future depended on the heavy investment that had been made in a highly sophisticated information system:

“You have to have industrial processes... The whole thing is driven from the system; it’s event-driven, industrialised processes” (information systems manager).

Thus, standard letters relating to, for instance, the admissions and registration processes, were generated automatically and mass produced. Space in which administrative staff in the 1970s model of academic administration (Figure 2 – page 52), would have undertaken similar procedures by handling large amounts of paper, for instance writing non-standard letters adapted to the circumstances of individual students, had become depersonalised. This created more space for management functions, such as the harnessing and utilisation of scarce resources.

The average length of service of staff interviewed from NewU was 9.5 years. Several respondents referred to the difficulty of retaining staff, particularly those with information technology skills, because of competition from employers in the finance and business sectors, where salaries were higher. One informant suggested that the

kind of factors that retained people in the pre-1992 sector (longer holidays, a well-developed infrastructure and social/sports facilities) were less evident in the post-1992 sector. The institution's focus was on its future potential as a mass higher education provider, and it could be described as a series of organisation and business systems. Rather than management control being tightly focused in a corporate centre as in Figure 3 (page 54), it was spread across functional areas, in which task-oriented managers were aware of, and open to, their external operating environment, as in Figure 4 (page 65). For ease of reference, summaries of the key features of the three institutions are given on page 131.

Translating the narrative accounts into a conceptual model

As an initial step, I listened to the twenty-four tape recordings that were made of the case interviews and made margin notes on each one, where necessary comparing them with the notes I had made during the interviews. Then, a factual profile of the sample was drawn up, both from the proforma and from the accounts of individuals. This included:

- age
- gender
- balance of specialist (for instance, finance, estates) and generalist (such as registry) staff
- location at the institutional centre or periphery (such as a department)
- career trajectories (in and out of higher education)
- self-classification in terms of management or administration.

Figure 11: Summary of Key Features of the Three Case Institutions***CampusU***

Pre-1992, campus university on green field site

Under 10,000 full-time equivalent students

1994 Group, balanced teaching and research profile

Short lines of communication from central administration to academic departments

Establishing partnership and outreach activity on remote sites

MultiU

Pre-1992, multi-faculty institution in large city

Around 20,000 full-time equivalent students

Russell Group, research intensive

Long lines of communication from central administration to academic departments

NewU

Post-1992, multi-campus institution in large city

Over 20,000 full-time equivalent students

Developing regional and business partnership

Long lines of communication from central administration to academic departments

Severe resource constraints

These were summarised in relation to each institution, and to give a sense of who people were, where they had come from, where they were positioned and what their interfaces were.

Those interviews that provided data about previously unobserved phenomena, such as people who displayed mobility between functional areas, or who were deliberately building a new kind of identity, such as professional or project managers, were fully transcribed (69% in all). A sample was analysed using NVivo, although I reverted to intensive re-reading of the notes and transcripts as the chapters were being written, writing further notes as I went along, linking the interviews with the development of a theoretical model. This work began at the same time as the conduct of the interviews, so that initial categorisation, interpretation and drafting became part of the research process (Creswell, 1994: 153-4). The process resembled the “data analysis spiral” described by Creswell (1998: 143) of data collection, management, reading, describing, classifying, interpreting and representing, with loops back as the material was re-visited.

Following Tesch (1990), quoted in Creswell, 1994: 155), the development of themes and categories was undertaken as follows:

- All notes and transcripts from the interviews with the twenty-four case respondents were reviewed. Significant aspects of the accounts, for instance, dissonance in understandings about the concepts of administration and management, or unexpected views about the concept of professionalism, were noted.

- The first analysis of the emergent data reviewed respondents according to their positioning in relation to functional and organisational boundaries in their institutions, their use of professional knowledge, their attitudes to higher education as a sector, their relationships with academic colleagues, and their involvement in expanding areas of cross-functional project work. This provided a basis for undertaking further analysis at the conceptual level, and for developing more detailed categories that would lead into the construction of a theoretical typology of professional identity.

Following a summary process of factual details, a detailed review was undertaken of selected transcripts, during which coding took place. The data analysis followed the three broad steps recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994: 12), of data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions, returning to each stage during the process.

Coding

Preliminary lists of codes were compiled in accordance with the procedure recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994: 58), using the research questions and conceptual framework as a starting point, particularly for descriptive codes. Thus, *descriptive codes* gave factual details about key dimensions of the study, *interpretive codes* noted, for instance, possible latent meanings arising from discontinuities and ambiguities among respondents, and *pattern codes* emerged from links or themes across the accounts of different respondents (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 57). Examples include:

Descriptive codes:

- administrative activity
- management activity
- concepts of professionalism
- knowledges offered by respondents
- relationships in which respondents were involved.

From the descriptive codes, a preliminary chart was constructed, detailing the characteristics of each respondent. Initially each respondent was described in terms of their prime allegiance, as having a sense of belonging to one of four domains: the *knowledge domain*, representing the professional knowledge acquired by an individual, the *institutional domain*, representing the employing institution, the *sector domain*, representing the UK higher education system, and the *project domain*, representing projects with which an individual might be involved. However, it became clear from this that while some individuals were located primarily within a single domain, a second group demonstrated a mobility between two or more, and a third group identified primarily with broadly based tasks in the *project domain*. The *sector domain* was the weakest in terms of there being any evidence of individuals who saw themselves primarily as belonging to a national cadre of professional staff dedicated to higher education. Furthermore, those people in the *project domain* appeared to demonstrate greater self-determination in actively constructing their identities than those who drew their identities primarily from a sense of belonging to one of the other domains.

Interpretive codes

These included:

- Dissonance and ambiguity arising in relation to, for instance:
 - understandings of administration and management
 - understandings of professionalism
 - authority and legitimacy conferred by roles.
- Creation of new, but ill-defined spaces, knowledges, relationships and legitimacies, such as:
 - space that is shared or contested
 - jointly constructed knowledge; knowledge lacking permanence or status
 - relationships involving partnership, new forms of service
 - building credibility for specific tasks; creating value on an *ad personam* basis; playing down authority and status.
- Evidence of multiple identities, such as:
 - different identities in different locales
 - composite identities
 - operating with different identities simultaneously
 - mobile identities eg massaging identity for different purposes.

Pattern codes

The pattern codes emerged from an overview of the data in the light of the conclusions emerging from the descriptive and interpretive codes. As this process took place, it became apparent that respondents could be distinguished by their

approach to the structures and boundaries that they encountered. The accounts were placed, therefore, into three broad groupings:

- People who were located within boundaries that they had either constructed for themselves, or which were imposed upon them, and were, therefore, governed by the “rules and resources” within that space. These were labelled as *bounded professionals*.
- People who moved across boundaries, using their understanding of the “rules and resources” of more than one type of space to construct their identity, performing interpretive functions and becoming actors in institutional decision-making. Although they were likely to have internal and external networks, they tended to see their futures within the sector. These were labelled as *cross-boundary professionals*.
- People who demonstrated a disregard for boundaries, or for the “rules and resources” which they might represent, having a more open-ended approach to the broadly based projects with which they were involved. They tended to draw on external experience and contacts, and were as likely to see their futures outwith higher education as within the sector. These were labelled as *unbounded professionals*.

Both generalist and specialist staff could be found in each grouping. The first included, for instance, an academic administrator and a personnel manager; the second a student recruitment manager, a planning manager and an information systems manager; and the third an enterprise manager, a human resources officer and a student services manager.

Pattern codes relating to bounded identities

- structure/containment (eg in understandings about roles, responsibilities, job descriptions)
- closure (eg denial of change; focus on past precedent; promoting continuity)
- control (eg via processes and systems)
- order (eg emphasis on who does what, when and where)
- service (eg to institution, academic colleagues, students, external clients)
- trusteeship (eg of regulatory knowledge; budget)
- fixedness (eg inflexible approaches to initiatives or colleagues in other functional areas).

Pattern codes relating to cross-boundary identities

- communication across boundaries (eg with colleagues, peers, academic and professional colleagues)
- translation/interpretation (eg working across functions to generate institutional knowledge)
- porosity (eg ease of movement across boundaries and interfaces)
- team working (eg mix of functions/seniority; conditions for membership)
- partnership and networking
- negotiation (eg across boundaries)
- political understanding.

Pattern codes relating to unbounded identities

- creativity with respect to new forms of knowledge and relationships (eg regional partnership)
- freedom/autonomy (eg existence of job description and who wrote it)
- potential (eg focus on future possibilities rather than past precedent)
- openness/fluidity (eg to other colleagues or functional areas)
- exploration (eg thinking unrestricted by organisation structures; ability to locate institution in broader world view)
- multiple timescales (eg able to work with exigencies of present and possibilities of future)
- networks (eg contacts and relationships, particularly outside the institution).

A smaller group of four overarching pattern codes were also identified, which transcended the typology of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded* identities:

Overarching pattern codes

- principles/values (eg as shown in beliefs, motivations and objectives)
- pragmatics (eg how activity is undertaken to achieve objectives)
- sense of journeying (eg in different spheres of activity/networks/projects)
- complexity (eg dealing with activities/issues simultaneously, possibly in different time frames).

The texts of the interviews were coded in the light of the emerging categories, which were reviewed and adjusted on an ongoing basis, until it was decided that those categories outlined above illuminated the data in a way that would enable the research questions of the study to be addressed.

Once a preliminary analysis had been achieved, the process of “de-contextualisation” became one of “re-contextualisation” (Tesch, 1990) during the second half of the study. In developing a theoretical model (Figure 12, page 140), four dimensions of professional activity emerged as “major organizing ideas” for the professional identities constructed by individuals (Creswell, 1998: 144):

- spaces
- knowledges
- relationships
- legitimacies.

A theoretical frame of identity, therefore, is used to develop an understanding of the different characteristics of the three types of professional across two dimensions. The first dimension represents the degree of agency that individuals adopt in relation to the structures and boundaries they encounter as *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*. The second dimension represents four major aspects of professional activity, namely: spaces, knowledges, relationships and legitimacies. Placing the three types of professional against the four aspects of activity, a model is created in which twelve categories, or units of information, about the characteristics of the three types of identities were developed from the coded data (Figure 12).

Thus, while the initial approach to the study was via the concepts of administration, management and professionalism, and the activities and relationships that these involved, additional dimensions emerged from the narratives of respondents. The

Figure 12: Typology of Professional Identities

Typology of Professional Identities			
Activity	Bounded identities	Cross-boundary identities	Unbounded identities
Dimensions	Categories of characteristics	Categories of characteristics	Categories of characteristics
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trusteeship (knowledge; budgets) - safety (audit; assurance) - prescribed/closed off (processes; systems; regulations) - space used to position/frame identity - 'own' space differentiated from 'other' space - offer a detailed map 	Boundaries used as device to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . traverse space . facilitate interpretation between functions . translate functional knowledge into institutional knowledge . offer signposts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a disregard for boundaries - functional space overlaps and merges - few fixed points - create new activity/knowledge space - accommodate complexity - little differentiation between internal and external space - offer a compass
Knowledges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - process/information-oriented - technical - regulatory - represent fixed core; institutional memory - reflect history; precedent; continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drawn from multiple organisational spaces - cross-functional - applied/mode 2 - interpretive; translational - can be politically oriented - can involve negotiated trade-offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - construct new institutional knowledge - use knowledge/experience from outwith sector - move beyond processes, systems, institution - fluid/provisional approach to knowledge - contextualising - future-oriented
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based on service/support - formal, hierarchical - clear distinction between academic and professional roles - strong ties within boundaries of locale - minimal weak ties - potential for 'us' and 'them' positionings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - negotiated across boundaries - politically astute - used to build advantage - opportunistic - strong ties within prime functional area (s) - weak ties to institutional, sector and external networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - free wheeling; mobile - negotiated on an <i>ad personam</i> basis - represent nodal points of networks - based on ability to take the part of others - strong ties within project - weak ties to institutional and external networks - minimal weak ties to sector networks
Legitimacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide advice, definition, control - know the answer - provide certainty, reliability, order, continuity - instrumental action - institutional regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interpret, translate, across boundaries - construct institutional alliances - build competitive advantage for own section and the institution - construct a case - negotiate agreement - contribute to ongoing decisions and outcomes - strategic action - institutional capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - investment of personal capital - creativity, originality and innovation - working with uncertainty, provisionality, complexity - maximising human potential - invest in longer-term future - communicative action - institutional development

process of analysis, moving back and forth from understandings about professional identities offered in the literature, to understandings offered by respondents, therefore, became an iterative process. What emerged, in particular, was the fluid nature of a significant number of professional identities, and the fact that although new spaces, knowledges and relationships were actively being created, these were as yet ill-defined, even by professional staff themselves. Furthermore, while the legitimacies associated with administration and management continued to be contested, staff were constructing new legitimacies to suit local circumstances, which were being tested *in situ*. The situation was, therefore, both dynamic and complex. A model was required that might describe these conditions, and so bring into view underlying movements that were not visible within the unitary frames of 'administration', 'management', or 'professionalism'.

From the model, the identities of *bounded* professionals might be summarised primarily in terms of maintaining boundaries to ensure functional operations and standards; *cross-boundary* identities in terms of the active use of boundaries in building ongoing institutional capacity; and *unbounded* identities in terms of disregarding boundaries to create additional space for institutional development. Moreover, there is a dynamic aspect to the model. As the capacity of staff expands and diversifies to cope with ongoing demands and future developments, the roles and identities of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*, in particular, are continuously re-defined and updated.

Of the twenty-four members of staff interviewed, twelve individuals displayed characteristics that positioned them primarily as *bounded professionals*, eight as *cross-boundary professionals*, and four as *unbounded professionals*. In reality, however, individuals may be on the border of different forms of identity, or move between these according to circumstances. The typology, therefore, should be regarded as a heuristic device for the purpose of illustrating a disposition towards one identity category rather than another, and as a basis for comparison, bearing in mind the warning that:

“Classifying people under broad categories can focus attention on a kind of diversity, but the reification can give differences and similarities a concreteness they do not actually possess” (Wenger, 1998: 61).

Conclusion

This chapter has described the three case institutions, the approach used in the analysis of the interview data, and the development of a conceptual model that will frame discussion of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded* professional identities in the following three chapters. These will be explored in the context of the key dimensions of professional activity: spaces, knowledges, relationships and legitimacies. Finally, ways in which professional staff negotiate their identities and legitimacies, as expectations on the capacity of universities, and the professional staff within them, expand over time and under conditions of complexity, will be reviewed. Understandings that emerge from the following chapters, therefore, may help to provide a fuller picture of how roles and identities are likely to develop in future.

SECTION 3: A TYPOLOGY OF IDENTITIES

7: BOUNDED PROFESSIONALS

Introduction

This chapter is the first of three chapters relating respondents in the study to the three identity types of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* presented in the model, as shown in the horizontal axis in Figure 12, page 140. Consideration is given to the positioning of each type of professional against established structures, such as regulatory and budgetary obligations, and the agency that they adopt in relation to the boundaries that they encounter, for instance, between functional areas, between professional and academic activities, and between the university and its external partners.

This chapter considers *bounded professionals*, for whom structures and boundaries provide defining parameters of their identity. This boundedness may be as a result of an individual's own volition, and/or reflect constraints that are imposed by the institutional environment. While at one level, clear identity boundaries may seem to offer a secure framework, for the individuals themselves and for others, for understanding roles and expectations, the data suggests that such understandings can be undermined in a number of ways. For instance, those who see boundaries as a protective device may come under threat of invasion, or if an individual finds that they have accountabilities in more than one bounded space they may experience a sense of not belonging to either, or of conflicting allegiance.

Overview

Those respondents characterised as *bounded professionals* work within clearly defined areas of space that reflect, for instance, regulatory or audit activity, professional practice such as personnel or finance, or service to an academic department. Such boundaried spaces represent the “rules and resources” that influence behaviour and activity (Giddens, 1991), as articulated, for instance, in a job description. *Bounded professionals* represent the “ideal” form of professional (Eraut, 1994) in that they offer measured judgements in accordance with knowledge that is accumulated via professional training, such as accountancy or human resources, and/or experience in the sector, such as the services expected by students. They can be relied upon to meet the expectations enshrined in their contract of employment, and their expertise is essential to their institutions in ensuring that regulatory and legislative requirements are met, and in providing continuity of service.

In displaying the characteristics outlined above, such staff can be seen as being aligned with the concept of the disinterested professional or civil servant who offers a reliable service in accordance with recognised standards, that are accredited externally or within the sector. A distinction may be made between the individual’s professional role and their views as an individual, as reflected, for instance, in the statement of a marketing manager:

“I don’t actually mind policy being not what I would choose, because it’s not my role ... If the university takes a different view to some things than I would, that’s up to it really”.

The only proviso to this was: "I wouldn't say something that was ... misleading, I wouldn't compromise my own professional credibility". Thus, this individual separates her own views from her role as a professional, while at the same time maintaining her professional credibility.

It was, however, noticeable from the study that of the twelve individuals categorised as *bounded professionals*, only two of them appeared to achieve such an accommodation between role and overall professional identity, with no sign of strain or tension. It may be, therefore, that in contemporary environments it is difficult to sustain the role expectations of more traditional forms of professional, notwithstanding the fact that there remains a need for the services that they offer. The tensions that emerged included, for instance, a sense of being excluded from meetings or activities, feelings of being misunderstood, criticised or even attacked, or demands being made to undertake activities that did not fit with an individual's understanding of their role.

It seemed appropriate, therefore, to explore possible sources of such strain by examining the relationship between *bounded professionals* and the boundaries within which they are located. As will be seen in the examples that follow, it appeared from the study that such boundaries may be either self-imposed, or imposed by the organisational environment. The four examples were chosen because they illustrate clearly the potential for tension in this category of staff in contemporary institutions. Evidence of similar tension was, however, also found in the narratives of six other *bounded professionals*.

Self-imposed boundaries

Two examples, in the portraits that follow, illustrate *bounded professionals* who locate themselves within self-constructed boundaries and use these to give definition to, and also to protect, their identities. Both were in second-tier posts, that is directly responsible to the head of administration. While one, an academic administrator from MultiU, had a generalist administrative background, the other, a personnel manager from CampusU, had a specialist professional background.

While the academic administrator defined his professional space in terms of functions that were clearly separated from the functions of other people and offices, the personnel officer defined hers, rather, in terms of her interactions with the people with whom she came into contact. Thus, while the academic administrator saw space in distinct boxes, with a clear gap between them, the personnel officer's space, although clearly enclosed, was contiguous with that of her colleagues.

A Bounded Professional (1): The Academic Administrator (MultiU)

A senior academic administrator had worked initially in an institution with a “civil service” ethos. This had provided well-defined routines, procedures and physical boundaries, from which he had learnt that “there were ways of doing things and that’s the way you did them”. He had moved to MultiU twenty years previously, and defined his role in terms of maintaining processes: “there’s a sense in which your job is keeping the show on the road...maintaining cyclical continuity”, and he was not comfortable with undertaking different tasks simultaneously, thus “manag[ing], plan[ning] and process[ing] at the same time”. His “contentment” derived from “trying to keep people happy” and “serving the university”. He had fixed himself in time and space: “I didn’t want to go anywhere else... The job was so interesting, the institution is as good as I want it to be...” and “...there is nothing I do now that I wouldn’t have done ten years ago”.

This well-contained identity had, on his own admission, become increasingly difficult to sustain. When student fee collection had been transferred from his section to the finance office, this represented not only a loss of control, but also a loss of completeness in his sense of responsibility for students. He was, therefore, nervous about what he saw as predatory relationships that trespassed on his territory, such as the development office arranging collaborative schemes abroad, or the graduate office wanting to register students. He saw student matters as the prerogative of his office and as something that could not be delivered competently by others:

“... nobody in the development office has a clue what the university is all about”.

His response to an emergent business orientation within the institution had been to retreat behind familiar boundaries, rather than colonising this new space: “We [in this section] regret that that kind of business orientation neglects what we regard as the bread and butter of the place which is students. I would say that the Registrar here has been sidelined”. This was symbolised by his displacement, literally, from a seat at the Council table in favour of the development officer. While seeming to provide security, therefore, the boundaries that this person had constructed had placed him in an increasingly vulnerable space.

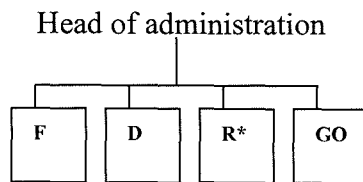
A Bounded Professional (2): The Personnel Manager (CampusU)

This senior personnel manager had moved into the sector from the NHS, and regarded the human relations aspects of her role as paramount, seeing herself “at heart... a personnel officer”, and her section as being validated by the fact that “the help is good and reliable ... it’s clear what’s what”. She was most comfortable with day-to-day, face-to-face interactions, and although she no longer had direct responsibility for academic staff or the trades unions: “...there are still some individuals who come to me, because it’s me they’re going to come to ... they will come to me about anything and everything”. She rejected the concept of ‘human resources’ as “a cold and calculating thing”, and she had devolved some of the functions associated with this, such as keeping up-to-date with legislation. Nevertheless, she had been obliged, as a senior officer, to accept “getting involved in strategy, not my favourite thing”, and adopted a measured, even resigned, approach to negotiations over resources: “what I’ve always tried to do is judge as best I can whether it is worth making a case and pressing forward ... just trying to remain emotionally detached from it”.

In responding to the interview questions she staked out her domain: “there are four senior personnel officers, and each of them has a bag of departments and sections, so that’s the system...” She further defined her territory in terms of her direct access to pro-vice-chancellors, the vice-chancellor, and the head of administration, who was her line manager: “I am free to roam and talk to the PVCs as I wish and they with me on the issues that come up”. Boundaries of responsibility were, therefore, clear, and she was not comfortable with the idea of there being a pro-vice-chancellor with a human resources portfolio who might cross into her space: “I don’t know how it works when you’ve got a PVC hanging around for HR as well. I’m jolly glad we don’t. And I wouldn’t like there to be one”. She had configured her space and positioned herself so that she was able to play to her strengths and see off potential predators. Her identity, therefore, was maintained round this essential, and fixed, core.

The shape of the respective spaces of these two *bounded professionals* could be described as follows:

Academic administrator's space



Key:

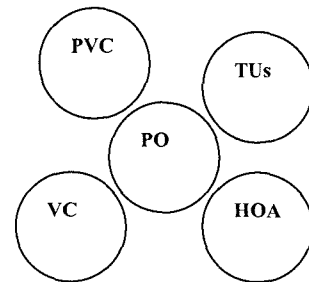
F = Finance Office

D = Development Office

R = Registry : *location of academic administrator

GO = Graduate Office

Personnel officer's space



PO = Personnel Officer

TUs = Trade Unions

HOA = Head of Administration

PVC = Pro-Vice-Chancellor

VC = Vice-Chancellor

Furthermore, the personnel manager demonstrated a mobility as she interacted with colleagues, and although she defended her territory, she was more active than the academic administrator in doing so.

Thus, the academic administrator, in adhering to a view of the institution informed by the organisation chart, did not see himself as having direct connections to his colleagues in the finance and development offices, or the graduate office. Each was seen as a discrete and separate domain of activity and responsibility, and they had clear space between them. The personnel officer, on the other hand, saw her surrounding space in terms of the people to whom she had direct access and with whom she interacted. The boundaries of her parcel of space, therefore, could be

adjacent to, though not overlapping with, those of others. While the boundaries of the academic administrator's space were configured so as to keep a distance from others, the personnel officer allowed hers to be contiguous with that of her colleagues. She saw herself in the centre of this people space, as the person to whom others came. Significantly, when asked about his interfaces, the academic administrator did not refer to his relationship with academic staff, suggesting that he had literally withdrawn into his own territory, although as Prichard suggests, his academic colleagues might have offered a natural alliance against the encroachment of what he saw as "managerial" intrusion Prichard (2000: 201).

Both the academic administrator and personnel manager used their boundaries to manage their activities in an orderly way, and to establish a sense of equilibrium by having control over the space they occupy. While the former kept a distance between the boundaries of his and other people's functions, the latter saw being adjacent to others as an affirmation of her authority. However, potential penetration of their space, in the case of the academic administrator by the finance office, the development office or the graduate school, and in the case of the personnel officer, by a pro-vice-chancellor (human resources), was perceived as a threat. Both achieved security by retreating behind their boundaries to affirm their sense of belonging within an orderly framework. Tension was apparent when they felt under pressure to adjust these; nor were they comfortable about working in shared space, either on their own initiative or on the initiative of others.

In this context, their titles were a significant issue for them. The academic administrator prided himself that he had persuaded the university to retain the traditional title of academic registrar on his forthcoming retirement, rather than moving to something more functionally oriented, such as director of student services. Similarly, the personnel manager had resisted taking the title director of human resources in favour of director of personnel services. There is, therefore, a sense of wanting to preserve a longstanding identity to which they were accustomed, and a change of title would have signified a sense of loss in this respect.

Thus, there would appear to be two key aspects of identity for *bounded professionals* who impose their own boundaries in this way. One is a desire to create an orderly positioning of the organisational spaces, knowledges, and relationships that they regard as their responsibility. The other is that of ownership (demonstrated in the use of “my personnel officers” (personnel manager)). They not only have a sense of belonging to the particular constituencies they have defined for themselves, but also feel in control of this space. Their world-view is, therefore, based on a clear definition of their locale, of which they feel they have guardianship, and from which their authority derives. They signify this legitimacy by the way that they name their territory and their staff, to provide a constant reminder of what and where these are.

Furthermore, the academic administrator and personnel manager see themselves, and their offices, as a repository of knowledge, for instance about regulatory or personnel issues. This knowledge comprises essential elements that may be added to over time, and do not become redundant. This may be built within the sector (as in the case of

the academic administrator) or a professional specialism (as in the case of the personnel manager). Their rootedness in spatial and knowledge terms suggests an essentialist approach to identity, represented by a fixed “core” of characteristics (Giddens, 1991; Henkel, 2000).

This type of bounded identity may be adopted as a defence against perceived threats, such as territorial invasion, so as to provide a sense of containment and security. However, the narratives of these two members of staff illustrate that boundaries can also generate stress and anxiety about what is going on outside them, generating feelings in *bounded professionals* that their identities could be undermined. This may engender denial of, and an unwillingness to adjust to, changes that are occurring in the wider environment. Thus, the personnel manager at CampusU (page 148) felt that the supportive aspects of her personnel role would be damaged by the use of the term ‘human resources’:

“... ‘personnel’ is a sort of gentler thing, which I think most people think has an ‘oh well they’re fairly harmless’ sort of feeling about it”.

Likewise, the academic administrator at MultiU (page 147) felt that his service role to academic colleagues and students would be threatened if his office were required to adopt “the sort of ‘management speak’ ... coming out of HR”. In some *bounded professionals*, therefore, the stress caused by threats to their identity can trigger a defensive attitude to their space and activity, causing them to reinforce their spatial boundaries.

These two examples of *bounded professionals*, the academic administrator and the personnel manager, have rooted themselves in, and are struggling to maintain, spatial

boundaries that are under pressure as organisational structures change. They see themselves as being contained within a given identity, as conferred for instance by their position in the institution or by their own expertise, and seek to reinforce their self-imposed boundaries. They are relying on structures or “rules and resources” for the attainment of their identity and legitimacy. In sociological terms, they represent an approach to social order based on shared norms and values (Durkheim, 1978; Parsons, 1967), and in valuing order they provide a stabilising influence on the institution, ensuring regularity and continuity.

This form of identity, however, comes under strain when changing conditions require adaptability and mobility, so that boundaries become an exclusionary device, facilitating denial of or withdrawal from the multiple and competing agendas described by Barnett (2000a). As knowledge becomes more accessible (via, for instance, institutional web pages), so that no one person can necessarily provide a comprehensive answer on a single issue, the value inherent in acting as a repository of accumulated knowledge, and preserving it in one location, is reduced.

Institutionally imposed boundaries

Other *bounded professionals*, such as the two departmental administrators at MultiU in the portraits that follow, experience stress because of the restrictions placed upon them by organisational boundaries, which they have difficulty in adjusting or crossing. The first administrator appeared to be isolated and even trapped in his role.

A Bounded Professional (3): The Departmental Administrator (1) (MultiU)

This departmental administrator had moved to a registry post at MultiU after a short spell in the private sector, and had been in his current departmental role for fifteen years. He saw himself as an 'administrator' rather than a 'manager', feeling that the latter term "came across as too hierarchical, particularly in relation to students", although "a lot of what I do is management". On the one hand, he positioned himself as "a member of the department ... not a member of the [central] administration", in a supportive, service role to his head of department: "I'm always there to help him, I'm there to support him ... he can rely on and trust in me, and ... I can take a burden of work off his shoulders ..." However, he also clearly distinguished his work from that of his academic colleagues, seeing it as his role "to release the academics to do the academic work", for instance in managing devolved finance and human resource functions. Despite the latter responsibilities, he rejected the notion of being re-titled a 'business manager', because it would create a barrier with academic colleagues if "they kind of think that you are of that ilk".

Nevertheless, despite a sense of allegiance to the department, he also felt that it was "a bit like being an alien in a different environment" because "you're surrounded by people whose whole reason for being here is completely different from yours". He was, therefore, not only alienated from the "bureaucracy" of legislative and audit requirements imposed by the central administration, but also from his immediate locale, creating a situation that was "very Kafka-esque", with "lots of people sending you round in circles". In identity terms, he hovered between a number of spaces, not fully belonging to any of them, but unable to bring them into an accommodation. He also found himself unable to see a way ahead in career terms: "... there's not a huge kind of obvious career path ... there's side channels. It's a strange career really. I've always thought 'What do you do?'" Although, therefore, he appeared content to have reached "the comfort zone" where he was "happy with the environment ... [and] the people you work alongside", he also had a sense of anomie. This could be attributed to his difficulty in either penetrating or accommodating to the boundaries between himself and his academic colleagues, and between himself and the central administration, as well as a lack of career pathways.

Neither the academic department nor the central administration offered him a locale that he could make his own. Two sets of “rules and resources”, one for the department and one for the central administration, seemed to pull him in different directions, creating a sense of indeterminacy in relation to knowing his identity and where he belonged. Although he had a strong sense of allegiance to the department, this could not offer him a secure identity, since it came with the proviso that he was, nevertheless, on the other side of the boundary that existed between professional and academic staff.

Furthermore, there were communication difficulties with both the central administration, because of what he saw as a steady increase in bureaucratic requirements, and with other departmental administrators, from whom he was isolated, but with whom he would have liked to share experiences. He was, therefore, unable to grow and develop his identity, despite attempts to do so (for instance, through organising informal meetings of departmental administrators to develop good practice). Although he was bound by his service role to the department, and by the regulatory and legal requirements of the central administration, a lack of congruence between the two sets of obligations had left him with feelings of vulnerability, of being “open to the elements kind of thing...” There was a sense in which, therefore, his identity fell between two locales, the department and the central administration, neither of which offered him full legitimacy, because in each he would be perceived as being associated with the other. Although he had the potential to become a *cross-boundary professional*, therefore, organisational constraints prevented him from achieving this.

A Bounded Professional (4): The Departmental Administrator (2) (MultiU)

This departmental administrator had begun her career as a research scientist and had worked in the civil service, which she had found restrictive: "if you don't do it this way there's no way you can do it at all". She had helped to establish the department eight years previously, identified strongly with it, and talked about what "we" do. Thinking of herself as an 'administrator' rather than a 'manager', she nevertheless acknowledged that "you have more of a management function than you probably realise you have". She "did not have a problem with the term 'administrator'", although "if the university did then I would use it with caution". She had, therefore, a background consciousness of her identity vis-à-vis the institution as well as in relation to the department. Nevertheless, she saw her role primarily as defending the interests of the department: "Not that the centre isn't interested in what you're doing, but they're in a different place to me". There was, therefore, a lack of congruence between her departmental and her institutional identities. Similarly, there was clear division between her activities and those of her academic colleagues: "The administrator's job is to keep as much of the administration away from academics as possible". In her case, this included preparing first drafts of policy documents, which she regarded as 'her' space, to be actively defended: "I would be very sad if I was not allowed to do things that I would be quite interested and willing and able to do ... So if I didn't have input to some key policy document ... I would have something to say about it".

She had, therefore, been active in establishing her territory in her relationship with successive heads of departments. While she expressed satisfaction with her brief: "I do like MultiU so I'm not likely to leave for something I don't think would be as good", she also she admitted that "I don't actually necessarily want to be here forever", indicating that the environment might be restrictive in terms of a future career: "Rather than growing into something naturally you've got to think about what you've got to offer in a much more strategic way". While to some extent she had established her own boundaries, there was also a hint that the further development of her identity was limited by organisational constraints, and that this required positive action.

Like the first departmental administrator, the second departmental administrator's prime allegiance was to her department, with a latent consciousness of her accountability as a professional to the central administration. In her case, this split is expressed by the use of two voices, one belonging to herself, and one belonging to her professional persona as departmental administrator, leading to a sense of identity fracture as well as of indeterminacy. This is illustrated by the fact that, on one occasion, there had been a lack of congruence between the approach of the departmental administrator and the head of department in producing a business plan for presentation to the senior management team. The administrator described how she was obliged to face in two directions, in order to distance herself from a plan with which she felt uncomfortable:

“I had to see [the university director of finance] afterwards and say this really... didn't have my input in the way I would have wanted it, because I don't see how it's sustainable, so I felt really awful saying, you know, *this is me*... I don't want to have to defend it because I can't” [CW's emphasis].

In this scenario, the departmental administrator's identity as a team player in the department, and as a competent professional at the centre, were both at risk. By using the words “this is me” she is attempting to overcome the conflict of allegiances by creating a third space represented by herself. Her self-consciousness about doing this suggests a hesitancy in relation to the legitimacy of using her own voice, the “me”, which removed her from the safety provided by the structural “rules and resources” of either the department or the central administration. In giving her ‘own’ opinion to colleagues at the centre she felt obliged to acknowledge that she was stepping outside

her brief of service to the head of department. There is, therefore, disjunction between her identity within the formal boundaries of her departmental role and her opinion as an independent professional, and she was obliged to become an active agent in stepping outside the legitimacy conferred by the former.

Although they have the appearance of having clear boundaries, provided by their formal roles and job descriptions, the identities of the departmental administrators come under strain, though in different ways, because of the difficulty of achieving credibility either in their departments or in the central administration. Not only are they unable to achieve congruence between the identities and legitimacies that are available to them in either locale, but they also struggle to achieve their own professional space in this respect. While they seek their identities principally from meeting expectations arising from departmental "rules and resources", they have the possibility of feeling de-legitimised when these prevent them from acting according to their own professional norms (by producing a business plan of a requisite standard, or networking with a professional peer group). Nor are they entirely legitimate within the academic department, because they are not academic members of staff. Whether this is expressed by an uncomfortable juggling of identity within formal boundaries, or apparent subversion outside of them, it can lead to the suppression of, and conflict between, components of identity, as well as feelings of alienation from the environment that is also the source of identity.

In contrast to the first two examples, the two departmental administrators are inhibited by the boundaries imposed by their roles, although they attempt to move

outside these, the first by establishing an institutional meeting of other people in similar roles to himself, and the second by making an independent input to policy and planning documents. They illustrate how boundaries can restrict the development of identity, in particular of an identity that has space for the independent judgement of the individual, to create, in Archer's terms "a role in which they can invest themselves" (Archer, 2000: 261).

Thus, in Archer's terms, the departmental administrators are unable to achieve their potential as professional actors because they "... cannot act promotively", and:

"reactions are restricted to the quiet cherishing of grievances or doubts, the lone rebelliousness of sacrilege, insubordination, or personal withdrawal" (Archer, 2000: 271).

There is a sense, therefore, in which the boundaries imposed by the structures in which these two departmental staff work are a liability for them. Because the individuals concerned do not have the status in either their department or the central administration to enable them to modify these boundaries, or to achieve a dialogue between the two locales, they are inhibited in fulfilling their potential identities.

Summary of *bounded professionals*

At the organisational level, using Douglas' (2005) framework of social forms, *bounded professionals* are likely to be associated, voluntarily or involuntarily, with positional cultures (incorporating strong regulatory and strong group boundaries), whereby identity is subject to structural and social constraints. Such cultures may be found at either institutional or sub-institutional level. A difficulty in achieving a

communicative dialogue across these boundaries is reflected in feelings of isolation from peers and colleagues in that, for whatever reason, they are unable to enter others' space. Furthermore, where an individual's own sense of agency, represented for instance by a broader sense of professionalism, is suppressed, it may emerge indirectly in defensive or conflicted attitudes.

In sociological terms, the relationships of *bounded professionals* could be said to be comprised of "strong ties ... of long duration, marked by trust and reciprocity" (Florida, 2002: 276) within the boundaries that they inhabit, with few "weak ties" extended outside this framework (Granovetter, 1973, 1974; quoted in Florida, 2002 (276-277)). They, therefore, focus their time and effort on close and regular relationships. This is exemplified by, for instance, the academic administrator (page 147) in relation to his staff, by the personnel manager (page 148) in her relationship with representatives of the trade unions, and by the departmental administrators (pages 154 and 156) in their relationship with their heads of department. These individuals, as *bounded professionals*, had less investment in "weak ties" with professional contacts in extended networks, either across the institution or externally, which would have provided them with opportunities for the exchange of institutional intelligence and professional practice. In terms of their internal reference group orientation, therefore, they might be seen as "locals" (Gouldner, 1957: 290).

At the level of the individual, using Bernstein's (2000) conceptualisation of knowledge boundaries, *bounded professionals* may be said to represent strongly

classified, strongly insulated categories and discourses, voluntarily or involuntarily, whereby:

“each category has its unique identity, its unique voice, its own specialised rules of internal relations ... the principle of the classification comes to have the force of the natural order and the identities that it constructs are taken as real, as authentic, as integral, as the source of integrity ... a change in the principle of classification here is a threat to the principle of integrity, of coherence of the individual” (Bernstein, 2000: 7).

In the context of the thesis, Bernstein’s use of the term “integrity” corresponds with the “legitimacy” accorded to professional staff, by themselves and others. Because *bounded professionals*, and their colleagues, derive their “integrity”, or legitimacy, from the structures in which they are located, this places them in difficulty when, as in the case of the departmental administrators, they try to relate to other locales that are also well-insulated. Although they are likely to be valued for reliable advice and service they provide, they might also be seen as representing Friedson’s “standardized administrative ... [service] to be dealt with by predetermined methods” (Friedson, 2001: 212), whether or not this is of their own volition.

The defensiveness of the academic administrator and personnel manager about protecting their identities within the boundaries in which they saw themselves as being located, and the frustrations of the departmental administrators in achieving current and future identity potentials, may be explained conceptually in terms of Bernstein’s classificatory system:

“Within the individual, the insulation becomes a system of psychic defences against the possibility of the weakening of the insulation, which would then reveal the suppressed contradictions, cleavages and dilemmas ... However, these psychic defences are rarely wholly effective and the possibility of the other, the unthinkable, the yet to be voiced, is also rarely silenced” (Bernstein, 2000: 6).

Thus, although the academic administrator and personnel manager seek to insulate themselves from activity outside their boundaries, their “psychic defences” are nevertheless disturbed by anxieties about possible predators. In the case of the departmental administrators, “contradictions, cleavages, and dilemmas” come to the surface as they struggle to accommodate to the co-existence of identities drawn from different locales. They are, however, only able to articulate these problems indirectly, through a sense of anomie and conflict that comes through in their narratives.

Conclusion

Bounded professionals, therefore, are contained within well-defined boundaries, whether by their own volition or because of structures imposed by the organisational environment. They are likely to identify with others in the same space, with whom they share similar “rules and resources”, which legitimise their activity. The desire of departmental administrators at MultiU to meet together as a group, for instance, reflects this collective impulse. However, while *bounded professionals* may appear to have identities that are cohesive, well-understood by themselves and others, and focused round an essential core, there is potential for tension. In the case of those

who draw their identity from establishing their locale within self-imposed boundaries, this can include threats to or loss of this identity space. In the case of those who are restricted by organisational structures, it can include frustration and anomie arising from an inability to realise identity potential.

The departmental administrators demonstrate, by the initiatives they adopt, that they might well, in other circumstances, have become *cross-boundary professionals*. This could be facilitated by more flexible organisational structures, and the support of a group of colleagues who could assist in influencing the nature of these structures, through what Archer (2000) terms “corporate agency”, that is a dialogue and alliance among social actors with similar interests to achieve goals that are mutually advantageous. As will be seen in the following chapter, *cross-boundary professionals* not only cross, but also actively use boundaries. This creates more identity possibilities for them, and for their institutions.

8: CROSS-BOUNDARY PROFESSIONALS

Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how *cross-boundary professionals*, rather than perceiving boundaries as a means of achieving definition and containment, actively use them as a means of working across a number of locales to build institutional capacity. For them, boundaries represent an opportunity to construct and modify their identities, not only by undertaking interpretive roles, but also by developing cross-institutional understandings that can be used in negotiations and, on occasion, for political purposes. In this respect, their approach might be said to reflect a “strategic action” orientation (Habermas, 1984: 285).

Cross-boundary professionals, therefore, demonstrate greater mobility than *bounded professionals*, and are able to hold together multiple identity components. They are pragmatic in the way that they do this, relinquishing elements of these components if necessary, and taking opportunities that arise to invest in alternative spaces, knowledges and relationships. By working at and across boundaries, they not only develop composite identities for themselves, but are also proactive in creating new forms of identity, such as that of the ‘professional manager’, bringing to bear experience from alternative locales.

Overview

While *cross-boundary professionals* recognise the significance of boundaries, they do not necessarily regard the space at either side of these boundaries as being mutually

exclusive. Rather than associating themselves solely with a single territory, therefore, they actively use boundaries to achieve superordinate goals across more than one area of activity. The examples that follow illustrate some of the implications of this for identity, and that as individuals cross boundaries they have different ways of achieving accordance between the spaces that they occupy.

Dual identity components

The first of these examples, a student recruitment manager at CampusU, was working between the regular administrative processes of student admissions and the management demands of a global recruitment market. In bringing together admissions and recruitment as different aspects of the same role, this manager was able to accommodate what he perceived as both ‘administration’ and ‘management’ activity in a seamless way. At the same time, he was building knowledge for the institution that might otherwise have fallen between registry and external relations departments. The student recruitment manager, therefore, was able to work in different forms of space, one involving administrative service with respect to the admissions process, and the other involving market decisions in a management capacity. Both were able to co-exist, without conflicting with each other. He flourished in this dual identity because he understood, and was comfortable with, the requirements of both types of space, but was not obliged to suppress one in favour of the other:

“It’s a job I’ve very much enjoyed, because it’s not one or the other”.

A Cross-Boundary Professional (1): The Student Recruitment Manager (CampusU)

The student recruitment manager had undertaken roles in student administration at two pre-1992 institutions before moving to CampusU, where he headed the student recruitment office. There were two elements to his role: undergraduate admissions, including the routines prescribed by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which he regarded as 'administration', and recruitment and widening participation, which he described as 'management': "because there isn't an awful lot of necessary ground rules of how this happens". Although he saw his role as involving "an element of both [administration and management]", he felt that he was better suited to interacting with people than to managing processes, and had therefore "grown" that aspect of his role, for instance undertaking schools liaison visits. His ability to move into activities that interested him was facilitated by the fact that he did not have restrictions imposed on him: "you don't have the oversight [from others]".

He saw it as a necessary part of his role to acquire knowledge from other parts of the institution, thus crossing internal as well as external boundaries: "...things work best when you actually have a working knowledge about allied areas of administration ... about funding arrangements ... because if you're going out to recruit that's often the question you're going to be asked". He was also involved externally with the national body of institutional liaison officers, and was active in using his networks to build market intelligence, or in situ knowledge, for the institution: "spotting trends, seeing the drift in qualifications, what it's likely to mean to our students and the recruitment pool ... getting ahead of the game rather than following the trend". He was, therefore, negotiating a boundary between offering a service and expertise on admissions, and a more competitive approach in a global recruitment market. In crossing between these two domains, he acted as an interpreter between the two. He was committed to a career in university management, but would only wish to go somewhere that "was having problems", in order to have the challenge of "turn[ing] university admissions and recruitment around". His approach to identity, therefore, involved not only crossing functional boundaries, but also growing his role over time, and he proposed to extend this further by developing his experience of public relations.

Although he had reached his current position via a traditional pathway of academic administration, he felt that he was temperamentally suited to the more “interactive” aspects of recruitment, involving external liaison and networking.

In knowledge terms, he was able to offer both process-oriented knowledge relating to admissions procedures, and knowledge relating to the market intelligence about recruitment. Thus, he not only maintained the institution’s admissions processes, but also contributed to building its capacity, aware that:

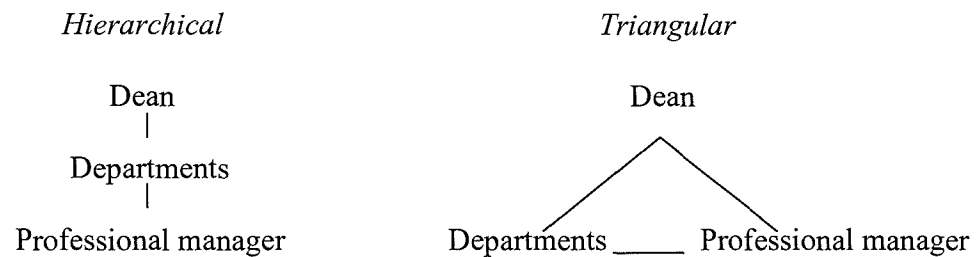
“the universities that do well are the ones that keep an eye on what’s happening elsewhere, rather than getting too caught up in what’s happening at their own institution”.

He therefore actively sought out the information that he felt was required, internally and externally, to move the institution forward in regional and international markets, rather than simply replicating past admissions policies that focused on school leavers. He also felt that this dual role conferred status on him as a professional:

“... because the situation’s got much more complex; it’s now accepted and appreciated that it’s helpful to have people who know a lot ... although how that relationship is managed has to be very carefully done”.

Although he was able to balance the dual aspects of his identity, he was also aware that this could be subject to different constructions at the interface with academic colleagues. He described this as “this façade, that we pretend exists”, comprising unspoken understandings about the functions of academic managers on one side of this boundary and professional managers on the other. On the one hand, there was a

formal, hierarchical relationship, involving advice and guidance to an academic manager, in this case a faculty dean, who had formal management responsibility for the student admissions process. On the other hand, authority for executive action in admitting students was delegated on a day-to-day basis to the student recruitment manager, in consultation with admissions officers in academic departments. The relationship between the professional manager and his academic colleagues, therefore, shifts between being a hierarchical and a triangular one:



Thus, the nature and shape of the interface changes according to circumstances. As he negotiates it, the recruitment manager derives legitimacy, on the one hand, from providing technical advice about A-level scores and meeting target numbers in a hierarchical relationship. On the other hand, he also derives legitimacy from having an expert place in a flatter management coalition by, for instance, being involved in policy discussions about whether the university should enter an emerging overseas market for students.

The flatter relationship reflects the consensus management arrangements described in the “soft” quadrant of Figure 1 on page 31, with the recruitment manager participating in shared decision-making:

“I can make strong recommendations and 99% of the time people go with the recommendations, but if people want to be difficult and say ‘no, you’re the administrator, I’m the admissions tutor’, then there has to be a much more negotiated solution... because they’re the person who has to teach the student ultimately; they’re the ones who therefore have to take the responsibility for it”.

Such a negotiation might include, for instance, whether or not a student should be admitted with non-standard qualifications, from home or overseas. The academic tutor might, for instance, have had negative experience with another student with similar qualifications, or vice-versa. The recruitment manager, on the other hand, might wish to take the risk, or not, on such a student, depending on the market position of the subject, and whether or not there was a shortfall of students in that area.

Only if the matter could not be resolved, that is, if the recruitment manager and admissions tutor failed to reach a “negotiated solution”, would it be taken to a higher level involving the dean:

“unless there’s a really serious problem, the dean wouldn’t be directly involved... but it does give a useful framework at times so, for instance, if a department and I have a major disagreement over a student, then the dean can act as the arbiter”.

Thus, it was open to the recruitment manager to pursue his own line of argument with a departmental admissions officer, and with the dean, in a discussion about whether a

student should be admitted, and to win or lose the debate according to the strength of his case and his powers of persuasion.

There is a sense, therefore, in which the recruitment manager could be said to have equivalent status to his academic colleagues in the making of the decision on such a matter although, formally, both the recruitment manager and admissions officers were subject to the ultimate jurisdiction of the dean. Thus, for those aspects of his work where he shares authority with his academic colleagues, the recruitment manager is an active player in the negotiation, having an independent voice, rather than simply being a conduit for information. In this role he might be said to be part of the “conversation” between the academic community and the institution (Barnett, 1993), in which communication is two-way. He stands, therefore, on a negotiated boundary, involving elements of both service and partnership.

Thus, the student recruitment manager was able to achieve a relatively seamless identity package from the two spaces he inhabited of admissions and recruitment, moving easily between the two. Having worked in a registry environment in the pre-1992 sector, he appeared to be relaxed about switching between ‘administration’ and ‘management’, within a “façade” of hierarchical, service relationships, within which management decisions were, in practice, made on a day-to-day basis by professional staff. In his case, therefore, the two functional spaces that he occupied were adjacent and contiguous, and he was able to bring them into symbiosis, whereby each informed the other.

Multiple identity components

However, the situation of other *cross-boundary professionals* could be more complex than that of the student recruitment manager, involving movement across multiple boundaries, and joint working with different constituencies, inside and outside the institution. For instance, the portrait that follows on page 172 demonstrates how an information systems manager at NewU, through his own agency, applied technical expertise to his understanding of institutional processes, such as student registration or payroll, to create a dedicated information system. This system was critical to the realisation of the university's mission of widening participation in the context of severe resource constraints. Furthermore, he was conscious that in order to create an interactive web environment for students, this activity needed to be informed by input from his academic colleagues, and he was trying to develop this interface. He therefore offered his institution a combination of expertise, which as he commented, was "unusual for IT people. A lot of them can't step back and articulate a problem to people who aren't technical".

Not only is the information systems manager constructing a new form of institutional knowledge by combining technical expertise with local knowledge, but he is also contributing to new space at NewU, which he refers to as the institution's "business environment". Thus, he also has a superordinate role as a business manager, involving the ability to, for instance, balance budgetary implications against likely outcomes, benefits and risks of proposed developments to the information system, so that fully informed decisions can be made. Furthermore, he distinguished his business-oriented approach from that of some of his academic colleagues in the

A Cross-Boundary Professional (2): The Information Systems Manager (NewU)

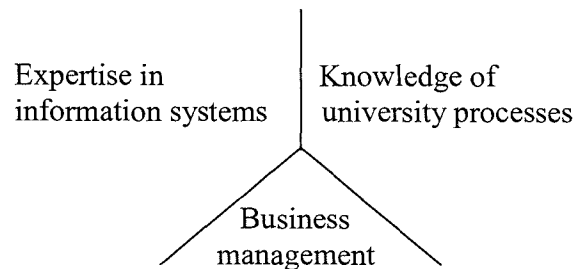
This person had entered the university, after graduating twelve years previously, as a data assistant in the planning department. He had risen rapidly through records management to be project manager for the introduction of a new administrative system, and thereon to become head of information systems for the institution. He acknowledged the support of his previous line manager, “who just let me get on with it”, and into whose post he stepped when the latter moved on to employment with the commercial supplier of the administrative system. He contrasted his initiative in this respect with the approach of other colleagues in the same project team: “they didn’t really grasp the nettle and move on, and, you know, you’ve got to put your head above the parapet don’t you, and go for it”. Thus, he had seized the opportunity, maximising the fact that through his planning experience he “had a good knowledge of the university”, as well as technical expertise.

He saw himself primarily as “an IS professional”, and his responsibilities covered the information system for admissions, payroll, human resources, virtual learning and the library, and therefore: “the interconnecting interfaces and the combination system”. He recognised the significance, for himself and for the institution, of working at boundaries, particularly those that might be divisive, for instance, by “go[ing] and talk[ing] through problems with functional people who aren’t technically aware”. Conscious of the criticality of such interfaces, he had established far-reaching lines of communication, in multiple directions. Internally, he saw NewU as an open network whereby he could connect directly with “the horse’s mouth”, from the Vice-Chancellor downwards. Externally, he maintained a dialogue with colleagues at other universities, and with commercial suppliers.

For him, institutional structure was represented by a business strategy that connected all forms of activity, rather than by an organisation chart. Thus: “we run our department as a business ... we’re given a budget and we make sure we stick within it”. He combined his business orientation, however, with a strong commitment to the sector, and although his external contacts had opened possible career avenues elsewhere, he “would be very surprised if I ever left HE”.

senior management team, referring specifically to an institutional e-university project, which had been a “monumental failure”: “I sometimes wonder about some of the decision-making at the very top level ... you think where’s the business model, where’s the case for this...”

His identity, therefore, comprised three segments:



Through his use of networks he was able to negotiate multiple boundaries internal and external to the university, and in this way both extended and diversified his knowledges and relationships. He also understood the implications of what he saw as the increasing complexity of institutional activity, albeit these tended to be technical, system complexities. These were triggered by, for instance, additional accountability and reporting requirements, a broader spectrum of students, and partnerships with other institutions and providers. Even a single decision, to expand short course provision, had increased the work of his department exponentially, in terms of both system design and the inputting of data.

In common with the student recruitment manager, the information systems manager was able to maintain his work in different spaces without a sense of conflict between them, even though he was crossing multiple boundaries. He did not, for instance, have any difficulty about seeing the university as a “business environment” and his commitment to higher education:

“It would have to be an amazing offer to get me out of here ... I do like working in a university ... you see students ... in the library, doing things ... you actually see what we are all working for ...”

Thus, despite the fact that his predecessor had moved into the commercial sector, and that a research and development role with a commercial supplier would be “quite similar, really”, he saw himself as remaining in higher education. He was, therefore, able to hold together what others might have found to be disparate elements in one identity package.

Thus, the information services manager, despite formally being a member of “the Administration” at NewU, is able to be open about his identity as a manager, and moves seamlessly between ‘management’ and ‘business’ space. By contrast, the third *cross-boundary professional*, a planning manager from CampusU, although she performed a cross-institutional role, was formally located in the academic section of the administration, and was obliged to observe a convention that professional activity at CampusU was referred to as ‘administration’, even though this might be a camouflage for ‘management’. She, therefore, downplayed both the management elements of her role, and her seniority, in the interests of developing her credibility as

A Cross-Boundary Professional (3): The Planning Manager (CampusU)

After completing a doctorate, this person had taken up an academic post in a college of further and higher education, where she became an academic manager, as a head of department, before moving to CampusU. Although she saw herself as having both an academic and a management background, when she arrived at CampusU she found that: "[management] is not a particularly valid concept here ... It's safer to call it administration, although we all know we mean management". Accordingly, she was located in the academic section of the administration, with a reporting line to the head of student services, although she was performing a cross-institutional role in constructing the institutional plan, and liaising between the central management team and academic departments about the latter's input.

Thus, she certainly "[didn't] feel that I'm providing a service...." and saw herself, rather, "as working in partnership ... especially once ... they [academic colleagues] begin to appreciate the sort of things that my involvement can bring". Her academic background enabled her to work with departments in developing academic initiatives, as well as assisting them with their contribution to the institutional plan: "This paper I'm writing at the moment ... I'm leading the bid, even though it's an academic bid, because I've got the experience and ... the understanding of the institutional context that's needed to put something like that together".

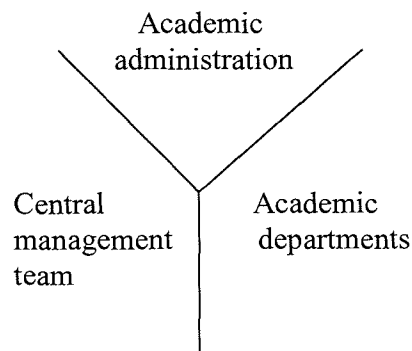
At the same time, and in order to construct the institution's strategic plan, which was an ongoing process, she crossed back and forth between the central management team and academic departments, acting as an interpreter between them. She was also involved in working with external colleagues on the establishment of new developments, such as learning partnerships and a new campus, and in developing an understanding of these internally, so that they were not simply "bolted on". She therefore moved between what might be seen as an 'administrative' role of facilitation, to a more 'management'-oriented role in actively progressing development initiatives. In the latter she was prepared to be "bolshie and difficult" if necessary. She saw her next move as being into an academic management role, such as a pro-vice-chancellorship.

the person who constructed the institutional plan:

“People say to me you’re quite senior aren’t you, and I say no, because ... you can’t make anybody do anything unless they think it’s a good idea ... it’s much more about bringing people on board ... and helping to build bridges”.

This person, therefore, massages her identity so as to accommodate to the environment at CampusU, where the space available for management activity is less explicit than, for instance, at NewU.

Although located in the academic administration, she draws on her work with the central management team and with academic departments in constructing a pan-institutional identity:



Moving back and forth between these locations, she negotiates with heads of department about their input to the institutional plan, interpreting the central management team’s vision for them. She does this by using a “soft” approach, reflecting the ‘administrative’ environment, to downplay any sense of a ‘management’ steer: “just seeding [an] idea ... gradually drip feed[ing] an approach ... and mak[ing] [academic colleagues] aware of an expectation”. Conversely, she is

also able to translate the aspirations of heads of departments to colleagues at the centre.

The planning manager does not regard her position in the formal structure as providing authority per se: “you have to work through [that] equation ... there’s no sort of authority that you come with”. She is, therefore, conscious of building her credibility through the institutional knowledge that she constructs by crossing between the centre and academic departments. Her relationship with academic colleagues in departments is essential to this process, and the reservoir of knowledge that she holds is also critical for decision-making in the central management team, who depend on her:

“I’m ... providing the senior management team with a comfort blanket, by getting all this information in and by constantly being aware and up-to-date with what’s going on in departments and being able to feed back to them; I think they’ve got the sense that they know what’s going on”.

Nevertheless, she also uses her regular meetings with the head of administration, and meetings as appropriate with pro-vice-chancellors, to reinforce her institutional mandate:

“I feel I’ve got more authority to influence if I’ve got some sort of direction from [the head of administration]”.

Despite the fact that she downplayed her status, her position at the interstices of academic and management activity was seen by others as giving her influence, and she admitted that “some heads of department seem to see me as being quite

powerful". She was, therefore, pragmatic in the way that she maximised the sources of authority available to her from multiple locales, in effect creating her own, superordinate, institutional positioning. She therefore turned it to her advantage that she did not belong formally either to the central management team or to an academic department, and in practice she bypassed her line manager in the academic administration, "who appraises me but doesn't really direct anything".

In common with the information systems manager at NewU, the planning manager saw herself as making a career in higher education, although she viewed her task portfolio as transferable:

"I applied [for the job] ... feeling that I could do the things they wanted because I had done them at [XXXX] College... All my skills and expertise are very generic, and I could move into a different kind of organisation".

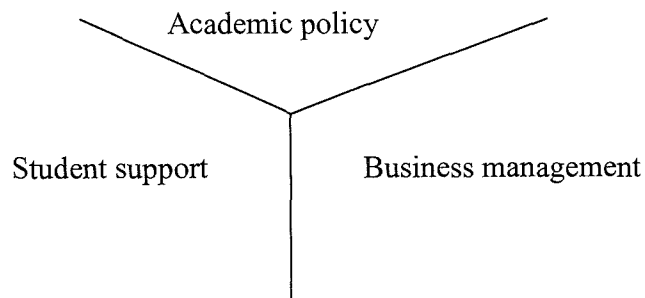
Furthermore, she saw professional staff who moved into higher education from different environments as offering added value in comparison with academic managers:

"when you've got these developments being led by PVCs who are academics, some of them have got an awful lot of management experience – but haven't really worked in a different kind of organisation – they don't really have the same overview".

Her ambition to move to a pro-vice-chancellor role suggests the emergence of a new form of generic professional manager, perhaps replacing the concept of the generalist administrator who was a member of an "academic civil service" cadre. For the sake

of possible future identities, therefore, the planning manager tolerated the ambiguity at CampusU between management and administration. This illustrates some of the trade-offs and compromises that may be necessary for *cross-boundary professionals* in constructing and managing their identities.

The fourth *cross-boundary professional*, a student services manager at NewU, also had a background of teaching in a higher education college. Unlike the planning manager, she articulated a sense of loss of her academic identity, but compensated for this by making a conscious decision to promote herself as a ‘professional manager’. Within the institution, the key elements of her identity were academic policy-making, student support, and business management, although academic policy had become less prominent in her current role:



Because of the development of what, in common with the information systems manager, she referred to as a “business” environment at NewU, the student services manager’s role had evolved away from academic policy-making towards “the business end of the continuum”. This included, for instance, making sure that student numbers, and therefore institutional income, were maintained. As a result, she sought

A Cross-Boundary Professional (4): The Student Services Manager (NewU)

The student services manager had moved into student services via a teaching and learning support role in a former teacher training institution, and also had professional qualifications in management and counselling. She regretted having been “[taken] out of academia”, which was symbolised by the fact that the descriptor “academic affairs” had been removed from her title, and by the change of her line manager from a pro-vice-chancellor to the head of administration. Furthermore, she was conscious of a “status differentiation” between academic and professional roles, and felt that her status had “plummeted to nothing” when she took on student services, because she became associated with “the soft welfare underbelly” of the institution.

She had therefore deliberately built her identity as a ‘professional manager’ and established her credibility in this respect by restructuring her department and introducing new management information processes. Notwithstanding her promotion of herself as a ‘professional manager’, she experienced a tension between offering an effective service to students, and the business systems required to handle large numbers in a mass higher education market: “working as tightly as human resources as we can ... I feel that probably it’s the students that have done least well out of it”. She rationalised this, professing to be “not too bothered about the idea of [the university] being a business”, if it enabled more students to benefit from higher education. Nonetheless, she was aware that she had shifted from the “neutrality” of academic policy-making to a position where she was expected to take a “self-interested point of view” in fighting for scarce resources, and that she was a player in institutional micro-politics.

This person, therefore, was at the interface of a number of spaces, crossing the boundaries of academia, business management, policy-making and student support. In doing this, she had entered an increasingly political arena, negotiating not only her case for resources, but also her own positioning. Thus, in contemplating these multiple identities, she was “not really sure what kind of professional I am any more”.

to align two roles, of maintaining a customer-oriented service to students, and juggling resources to support an online information system, which enabled the fulfilment of the widening participation goals to which she and the institution were committed. She had been obliged to restructure in her department, and reduce staff numbers, to achieve this. She was, therefore, torn between providing a user-friendly service to students, and organising this on a relatively impersonal basis, at the same time as motivating her staff in an environment of resource constraint.

At times, however, it was necessary to accommodate less favoured aspects of these multiple identities by distancing herself from them. This is apparent in the way that she depersonalised her professional persona in relation to, for instance, external requirements such as audit, so as not to be too closely associated with them, speaking of her activities in this area in the second person:

“... the bureaucracy becomes the arm of the accountability side, and it’s not so much to allow the smooth running of your organisation, it’s just that your organisation has to meet external needs and so it’s done through sort of bureaucratic means”.

She also speaks in the second person vis-à-vis her academic colleagues, with whom, given her academic background, she might in other circumstances have been expected to identify, implying regret that she is no longer ‘one of them’:

“You’re unpopular anyway, because they don’t like the work you do [for instance increasing the student intake to maintain income], and then it’s even more unpopular because you’re seen to be the person making them jump

through hoops. I mean, you wouldn't want to particularly, but that's just the [external] performance indicators and all the rest of it..."

This impersonal mode of speaking is in contrast to the use of the first person, for instance, when she talks about her regret that resource constraints prevent a more personal service being offered by staff in her section:

"What I would like is to be able to allow my staff a bit more of the luxury of being service professionals [having more time for one-to-one assistance to staff and students] ... and thinking about how we can do this in the best way possible, and for those things to be valued and legitimated".

Conscious of her academic origins, which is where she felt that her "true heart" remained, she confessed not only to a sense of loss, but also to having multiple identities:

"I've been through so many... I mean I've been a teacher trainer, I'm a trained counsellor, I've done management, and ... you know, do all sorts of other things [this included work for regeneration and non-government agencies]. I don't quite know what I'd define myself [as] ... "

Nevertheless, she had responded to this loss pragmatically, by consolidating her identity as a 'professional manager', in effect creating new space out of what was available to her. This included membership of local associations and business circles, and she was, therefore, developing her credibility in this respect beyond the boundaries of higher education. As a result, she felt that she identified more closely as a manager with colleagues outside higher education than she did with institutional colleagues. She believed, also, that promoting herself in this way would be an

advantage if she wished in the future to cross into an academic management position at another post-1992 university.

Her account was also a political one. For instance, in taking a stance on issues such as whether or not additional students should be admitted, she was expected “[to] ... really fight your position ... be cleverly shrewd ... and combat your opponent”. Again, she uses the second person, distancing herself from such combative behaviour, reflecting her regret that “neutral” policy-making was no longer an option for her, and that in negotiating compromise solutions there are likely to be winners and losers.

However, despite her sense of loss of an academic and student focus, and of not knowing “what kind of professional” she was any more, the student services manager had kept her options open by incorporating a more business-oriented approach into her identity:

“I’m not too bothered by the idea of it being a business, not at all, or even being a teaching-only university ... because at the moment we have got this very, very ambitious set of objectives around absolutely everything you care to mention, so we don’t do any of it very well ... I think having a much purer set of objectives and saying ‘ok we’ll just be a teaching-only university’... I think we could deliver a really good product...”

Summary of *cross-boundary professionals*

Like *bounded professionals*, *cross-boundary professionals* are conscious of the significance of structures and boundaries, and even dependent on them for their

identities, although for different reasons. However, unlike *bounded professionals*, they actively use boundaries, and the spaces on either side of them, to construct superordinate identities, seeing boundaries as opportunities rather than as constraints. Thus, while the academic administrator (page 147) and personnel manager (page 148), as *bounded professionals*, address potential loss of identity by protecting existing boundaries, the student services manager (page 180), a *cross-boundary professional*, by contrast, responds by seeking to create a new identity of 'professional manager'. The departmental administrators (pages 154 and 156) are, as *bounded professionals*, unable to achieve congruence between the different spaces in which they find themselves, and express this via a sense of frustration and dislocation, whereas the planning manager (page 175), a *cross-boundary professional*, by massaging her identity, is able to negotiate the boundaries with academic colleagues, between the centre and the departments, and between 'administration' and 'management'. In contrast with the academic administrator (page 147), a *bounded professional* who believes that only he knows how to manage 'his' space, *cross-boundary professionals* are comfortable about transferring knowledge in both directions across internal and external boundaries.

Two related features distinguish *cross-boundary* from *bounded professionals*, firstly, their willingness to be proactive in relation to structures and boundaries, and secondly their recognition that these do not necessarily constitute divisions or barriers, but can offer possibilities and opportunities. The institutional knowledge that *cross-boundary professionals* construct across different functional spaces might be said to be "weakly classified" (Bernstein, 2000: 10), for instance spanning admissions and recruitment

activity in the case of the student recruitment manager, and spanning technical systems and institutional processes in the case of the information systems manager.

Cross-boundary professionals are also pragmatic in achieving their objectives, for instance the planning manager in downplaying her 'management' activity, and the student services manager by relinquishing an academically oriented role in favour of a greater emphasis on business development. Furthermore, their understanding of different functional areas of the institution can give *cross-boundary professionals* an overview that is politically advantageous, for instance in arguing their case. In relation to Habermas' action types, therefore, they might be classified as being involved in "strategic action", in a "social action situation", that is "action oriented to success ... following rules of rational choice and assess[ing] the efficacy of influencing the decisions of a rational opponent" (Habermas, 1984: 285).

Thus, in Archer's terminology, *cross-boundary professionals* display the ability not only to "animate" their roles (Archer, 2000: 288), that is to act them out, but also to actively contribute to, and "personify" these roles "in a unique manner" (Archer, 2000: 296). The student recruitment manager does this, for instance, through his external relations activity, and the student services manager through the development of a new role of 'professional manager'. Furthermore, they are able to negotiate their position, and are "aware of what they want, can articulate it to themselves and to others ... [and] have organised in order to obtain it ..." (Archer, 2000: 265). By interaction with different constituencies across the institution, therefore, *cross-boundary professionals* are able to overcome the tendency for isolation that is evident

in the narratives of *bounded professionals*, and are able to act as corporate agents in contributing to “interest groups”:

“Corporate Agency transforms itself in pursuing social transformation ... New roles are created, and these constitute new positions in which more people can willingly invest themselves. ...” (Archer, 2000: 11).

By contributing to policy- and decision-making, all four *cross-boundary professionals* profiled in this chapter were helping to build the capacity of their institutions to deal with their environments, for instance enabling CampusU to integrate local partnership activities with its research-oriented profile, and NewU to deliver higher education to a mass higher education market, while operating within tight resource margins. *Cross-boundary professionals*, therefore, are able to accommodate the ambiguities that can arise from inhabiting more than one form of space, and to use these both for institutional purposes and as an investment in their own future roles.

Conclusion

Cross-boundary professionals, as they move beyond the contained environments of *bounded professionals*, demonstrate that boundaries, and the tensions arising from them, present opportunities for the construction of identity. Rather than operating as representatives of a particular process or function, and drawing their legitimacy solely from structural “rules and resources” (Giddens, 1991), therefore, they become their own agents in establishing their identities in negotiation with academic and other colleagues. Not only do *cross-boundary professionals* use boundaries to draw identity

components from more than one space, they also manage ambiguities that may arise from this process without becoming conflicted. Thus, while *bounded professionals* are contained by institutional boundaries, valuing the neatness and closure that these bring, *cross-boundary professionals* work actively at and across these, thereby assisting their institutions to build the necessary capacity to meet the demands of changing environments. However, their ability to do this is likely to be influenced by the nature of the institutional structures and boundaries that they encounter, as will be seen in chapter ten.

Cross-boundary professionals may display aspects of identity that can also be found in *unbounded professionals*, to be described in the following chapter, for instance, a comfort about working beyond the external boundary of their institutions. However, the staff in the examples given are categorised as *cross-boundary professionals* because they work with a consciousness of institutional boundaries, internal and external, and use these in constructing their identities. *Unbounded professionals*, by contrast, as will be seen in chapter nine, have a disregard for boundaries, and take a more open-ended approach both to their activities and to their environment.

9: UNBOUNDED PROFESSIONALS

Introduction

This chapter considers those staff characterised as *unbounded professionals*, who distinguish themselves from *bounded* or *cross-boundary professionals* by having a disregard for organisational structures and boundaries, or for their positioning in relation to these. Rather, they locate themselves in broadly based task areas which they develop out of functions such as personnel, registry, and research support, into more open-ended projects around, for instance, professional development, student support and welfare, and regional partnership.

Less mindful of fixed points of reference, therefore, *unbounded professionals* work in space that they have helped to create, and in which individual functions mingle. They are not discomforted by a lack of containment, having a fluid and open-ended approach to their activity, characterised by networks of knowledges and relationships. Rather than entering a political debate, they are more likely to work in an exploratory way with tension, and even conflict, seeking a common basis for understanding between interest groups. In this respect, their approach might be said to reflect a “communicative action” orientation (Habermas, 1984: 285). They are, therefore, prepared to enter messy, or even dangerous, space that others might avoid, although they may find it less easy to provide orderly solutions within a finite timescale. Their professional space, therefore, is characterised by a freewheeling approach, whereby they contribute towards institutional development by, if necessary, re-conceptualising the space that they and others occupy.

Overview

Three respondents, in the portraits that follow, demonstrate the characteristics associated with *unbounded professionals*. The individuals concerned worked in registry, personnel and enterprise offices: two at CampusU and one at NewU. As their institutions took cognisance of extended projects such as professional development and regional partnership, these individuals were at the forefront of their delivery. All three had worked in other sectors, including further education and the charitable and private sectors. However, there were no examples of *unbounded professionals* at MultiU. While this could be because the sample offered did not include such people, despite a request for as broad a range of respondents as possible, it may also suggest that the structures at that institution were a less favourable environment for the open-ended ways of working that characterise *unbounded professionals*. This will be explored further in chapter ten.

Unbounded space

Unbounded professionals' open-ended approach to the space they occupy is illustrated by their descriptions of what motivates them:

“I work better under that kind of circumstance when I’m allowed to explore things that I think need exploring” (human resources officer).

“I enjoy the freedom of it... that you’re kind of trusted to get on and deliver...” (enterprise manager).

Thus, they value the fact that they are trusted to move outwith known spheres represented, for instance, by the parameters of organisation charts or job descriptions,

An Unbounded Professional (1): The Student Support Manager (CampusU)

The student support manager had entered her career via student politics, working in student unions and a charity before taking on broad responsibilities for student welfare support at CampusU. Having acquired a management qualification en route, she was aware that it was increasingly common for people in her type of role to have counselling-related qualifications. Her portfolio included the distribution of hardship funds, student counselling, and advice about disability and welfare, as well as the co-ordination of part-time tutors, residential wardens, and volunteer advisers.

The establishment of a student support office had involved a transfer of responsibilities from an academic manager (a dean of students) to the student support manager. The latter's role had, therefore, become a mixed one, involving administration (of hardship funds), management (of staff and resources), and professional services (pastoral care and welfare). It included giving introductory talks to welcome new students and providing an advice service to students in difficulty, functions that would previously have been undertaken by an academic tutor. The student support manager was, therefore, helping to re-define the form and nature of some of the more pastoral aspects of academic space. This involved her in a web of relationships, managing a mix of academic, administrative and professional staff including, for instance, part-time tutors and wardens in residences. Her working space had, therefore, become blurred, and finding pathways through it could require intense concentration, thus: "when things are tough... I tend to focus everything on trying to sort things out".

At the same time, the use of committees as the prime locale for decisions about student support had been superseded by a more active articulation by the student support manager of the need to prioritise student support within the institution. By "making a case and being heard", she was able to move student welfare onto institutional management agendas, so that it became "embedded" rather than an "optional extra". This not only enhanced the effectiveness of the service and raised its profile with prospective students, but also meant that she was, indirectly, making a contribution both to institutional reputation and to market share.

to view issues from a different angle or through a different lens. The above statements compare with the more passive language of, for instance, the *bounded professionals* portrayed in chapter seven, who see themselves as fixed points of reference to whom others come for advice, rather than actively problematising spaces and relationships, for instance as in, “[they] come to me, because it’s me they’re going to come to” (personnel manager, CampusU – page 148).

This freewheeling approach means that *unbounded professionals* are comfortable about occupying space that is ill defined. A significant proportion of their work takes place in space which others find difficult or uncomfortable or challenging: the student support manager (page 190) through pastoral care arrangements for students, the human resources officer (page 192) through development programmes for heads of department, and the enterprise manager (page 194) by trying to facilitate the involvement of individuals in regional partnership, notwithstanding increasing numbers of students, which he saw “as a cue for a nervous breakdown” on the part of his academic colleagues.

Unbounded professionals not only acknowledge the existence of space outside formal organisational boundaries, but also recognise that this might be difficult to manage. Nevertheless, they are willing to move into and work within such space, rather than distinguishing it as something to be avoided or ignored. For instance, they all spoke of dealing with stress in other people, and of managing this on a day-to-day basis:

“part of my motivation is to support the staff that I’m managing... I can see that their workload is unmanageable, I can see that their distress levels are...

An Unbounded Professional (2): The Human Resources Officer (CampusU)

The human resources officer had moved to CampusU via industry and a college of further education, and her formal role combined operational matters, such as recruitment and contracts, with a management development function. Her line manager spoke of her as a rising star, who was developing the brief she had been given in innovative ways:

"...Annie [not her real name] is really quite something, she's rising fast and very bright, doing her master's... I wouldn't have expected to have someone aged twenty-seven doing that sort of stuff and making their mark with everybody across the university, asking to have her facilitate things..." Thus, Annie worked across functions so that, in her words, they "mingled together", to bring institutional strategy, academic agendas, and the career development of individuals into one composite space, believing that: "issues on the personnel side often need some management development intervention for a solution, so it's one and the same role really". Furthermore, her aim was to "underpin the strategic plan of the university" by "be[ing] creative in the role". In her work, therefore, she was not so much crossing boundaries as dissolving them, so that individual and institutional development could occur simultaneously.

It had become apparent via staff development programmes that managing people was a greater challenge for rotating heads of department than budgeting or finance, because of the tensions and conflicts that could arise from managing a peer group: "They think '... I didn't think this was going to be the case' ... it's the fact that they're managing their colleagues that they have to go back to; ... how do they manage poor performance... without causing huge grief and making it uncomfortable for the rest of the staff". She saw management development, therefore, as a more complex matter than, for instance, simply offering one-off courses. To her it was a question of also being available on a continuous basis to anyone who wished to discuss any subject or problem, so as to "keep it as an open relationship". She was, therefore, not only constructing her own role, but contributing to the development of heads of department roles, as they moved from being departmental chairs to being academic managers, and as they developed working relationships with local, professional departmental managers.

going out of control ...” (student support manager).

This involved an investment of time to listen to and advise staff about managing their work in sub-optimal conditions. Likewise, in relation to students with welfare and disability issues, the student services manager saw a key role of her office as being one of “comforting them through the whole process”. There is a sense, therefore, in which those categorised as *unbounded professionals* make it a priority to support others who work in difficult environments, on the edge of what is possible.

Thus, the space occupied by *unbounded professionals* might be said to have a provisionality about it, whereby it is seen as appropriate for the time being and for the task in hand. For instance, the student support manager was exploring new locales in which pastoral and welfare activity might be discussed and promoted:

“I think we probably have a different kind of voice than we would have had in the days of the dean of students, because the dean of students sat on every university committee... I’m not sure that that’s really where the voice needs to be heard”.

The spaces within which discussions about student support occurred, therefore, rather than being confined to committees, had become diffused across the university. Likewise, the management development project being undertaken by the human resources officer supported heads of department in space that was emerging as a result of more distributed institutional management arrangements.

Furthermore, because the space they occupied might not be entirely secure, and because they were interested in creating new forms of space, these staff were aware

An Unbounded Professional (3): The Enterprise Manager (NewU)

The enterprise manager, after charity and youth work, had arrived at NewU nine years previously “as the university’s first and only corporate research administrator”. During this period the space around the research office had been expanded and re-configured, to bring together research development, enterprise and regional partnership. His account suggested that his role had been as a pathfinder, staking out new terrain: “I didn’t have a job description. I wrote my own, effectively. So I came in and tried to get to know people and define appropriate areas of support, and over time I seemed to either develop or acquire more and more areas... if there’s a need I pick it up, [and] do my best to make a contribution”. He saw his role as providing “activities that help to provide an appropriate strategic framework”. The developmental nature of this work meant that he approached it in terms of a project: “In another language I’d have been a project manager for the last nine years”. To this end he was undertaking accreditation in project management: “It’s not enough just to know a lot about IT or anything like that [he had a master’s degree in information systems], you have to understand the pseudo-scientific principles of project management, that underpin the delivery of projects on time to budget”.

He had been promoted recently to a new, overarching role, involving “a whole new brief in terms of how research fits with the wider third leg academic enterprise kind of agenda” with the aim of assisting academic staff to become involved in enterprise partnership. This involved lateral links across different campuses, with academic directors of research, academic staff undertaking research and consultancy, business development officers, and external partners such as the regional development agency. He was, therefore, bringing together multiple agendas, involving the exploitation of research for both commercial and regeneration purposes, and was at the centre of a communication web. Thus, he referred repeatedly to being “keyed into” (with the suggestion of unlocking) networks associated with external research, enterprise and partnership, providing points of contact to open doors for the lateral exchange of experience and knowledge.

that they would be likely to outgrow the space they currently occupied, and move on. For instance, the enterprise manager had already relinquished what he saw as process-oriented administrative functions to work in an area that was continuously reshaping itself:

“I’m quite happy to have come over here and to be in this department, because it’s the one area of the university which is growing... that is serving a timely need and agenda. I’m happy to have lost all of that administrative function of supporting research students”.

Rather than associating himself with repetitive procedures, he preferred to be linked with his broadly based project, in which, in Archer’s terminology, he was able to “invest” himself (Archer, 2000: 11) as opposed to merely “animating”, or acting out, a pre-determined role (Archer, 2000: 288).

There is, therefore, a sense in which the identities of these staff grow with their projects, carrying them forward to new roles in the future:

“I see myself as moving into the business development area a lot more, which gives me the opportunity to re-package myself for new jobs outside of the sector... [The university environment is] not for me for ever for sure” (enterprise manager).

Similarly, the student support manager:

“...some of the people that worked within this office in the past are now working elsewhere in the section... but I don’t think I’ll be doing that... I would be quite confident actually of being able to work ‘out’ if I needed to” (student support manager).

They are, therefore, not dependent on the frames provided by their immediate environment, knowing that they have the resources to create their own space in a different locale.

Thus, *unbounded professionals* are likely to locate themselves at the interstices of functions, facilitating interaction between, in the case of the student services manager, pastoral care and the organisational arrangements required to deliver it; in the case of the human resources officer, personnel functions and management development programmes; and in the case of the enterprise manager, research development and business partnership. Whereas *cross-boundary professionals* tend to move from one space to another, using boundaries to clarify where they are, where they are not, and where they might be, *unbounded professionals* have a world-view that is conceptualised as a flow of projects and relationships that are unconfined by boundaries. Thus, they tend not to differentiate between activity within and outside the university, or between staff, students, clients or partner organisations, responding to each set of circumstances and building each relationship as it arises, and without pre-judging what form this might take. For them, therefore, it is possible for a job description to become “what you want it to be really” (human resources officer).

However, their approach can create challenges for them in managing their activity, and in relating to formal organisational structures. For instance, when the student support manager found that there was a “big backlog of [hardship fund] applications... complete chaos really”, rather than trying to disguise the situation with

the appearance of order, she was open about communicating and sharing it with those affected:

“I wasn’t going to say well it’s ok we can cope, I was saying ‘actually we’re in a bit of a crisis here’... we’ve sent all-staff emails saying that we’re closed for a week to deal with this, and all-student emails saying ‘bear with us, you’ll get your money eventually’” (student support manager).

This manager does not, therefore, allow concern about a loss of control, or the fear of it, to be the overriding consideration in her response to the situation. However, her approach suggests that those categorised as *unbounded professionals* may err on the side of providing too little definition of their activity for organisational purposes, which could imply a lack of control, and cause a loss of confidence in the system if it occurred too frequently.

Unbounded knowledge

Unbounded professionals’ freewheeling approach to organisational space is also reflected in the way that they develop new forms of institutional knowledge, against which procedural and information-oriented knowledge may be contextualised. For instance, the human resources officer had become involved in a project looking at the employment of women across the university, including:

“whether or not there were any glass ceilings anywhere ... any particular cultural boundaries that we should be aware of...”

This project was developing knowledge that could illuminate, for instance, statistics about the number of professorial chairs held by women, and the belief that there were not sufficient female candidates to improve the overall profile of women in senior

positions. Through this research about why women were not putting themselves forward for promotion, for instance because of cultural or lifestyle issues, future employment and training practices could be re-oriented. Thus, a new knowledge dimension is created to contextualise statistical information, and to review the professional development schemes that were available.

The human resources officer also uses the opportunity provided through her own higher degree study to investigate what the term 'management' means to academic colleagues, and what might be the influences on this:

"My own MSc thesis ... is looking at academics' conceptual understanding of the terms 'management' and 'leadership', and where that would come from; how they've constructed it, and if management development in the university has some kind of influence on the understanding that they have. I'd also like to see how that's reflected in their behaviour..."

By researching understandings that lie behind, for instance, what people say their development needs are, she is developing new layers of knowledge, at the same time as managing the operational aspects of the institution's management development programme. In recognising the tension in newly appointed heads of department about managing their academic peers, the human resources officer is able to interpret and re-focus a problem that might be presented as, for instance, a disciplinary or regulatory issue, as something that indicated a broader development need:

“You don’t just sit on the end of the phone and tell them do this, do that. We go through it with them. You coach them through it the first time, so then they’ll know how to do it the second time”.

Her approach allows her, therefore, to interpret the requirements of individuals in order to set up longer-term solutions to problems that may not be immediately apparent.

Likewise, the enterprise manager adopted a diagnostic approach to issues that might not be directly articulated, so as to inform working across the boundary of research activity and regional partnership with business and the community:

“Essentially most of the academics here are up to their eyeballs in teaching ... so it means that when you are trying to sell a different agenda it’s very difficult. It’s often just about bureaucracy and administrative interference... when I’m not sure they’re actually saying that... They’re kind of saying ‘I’m busy and I’m stressed and I just can’t cope with it any more.’”

By taking the part of his academic colleagues to identify issues that were *not* being articulated and were, therefore, hidden from direct view, he was able to propose further research, via “some rigorous cultural analysis”, so that academic staff would “feel more empowered to do more different things”.

Both the human resources officer and the enterprise manager also demonstrate the ability to contextualise their respective knowledges. Thus, the human resources officer relates the needs of individuals to university strategy and to the wider higher

education policy environment. In doing this, she was contributing to a reconceptualisation of the human resource function:

“Personnel is a strategic function. It’s not just something that turns over the contracts. It is something that should be on board”.

Similarly, the enterprise manager, in acting as a broker in negotiations with external partners, brings together different sets of knowledge, relating the scientific potential of research collaboration to the investment potential for funding agencies. Through professional networks, he has a sense of what the market will bear as an overhead, and what competitors might be charging. Thus, as well as consisting of expertise that may be applied as a solution to a one-off problem or project, knowledge becomes, in the hands of *unbounded professionals*, a longer-term investment for their institution.

Unbounded relationships

Whereas *bounded* and *cross-boundary professionals* are clear about their positioning in relation to others, and feel that it is important to know where they stand in this respect, *unbounded professionals* are less likely to see themselves in terms of fixed or pre-defined relationships. Any sense of belonging to a professional group tends to be for current purposes, for the time being, rather than conferring a permanent identity. Thus, while the student support manager’s contact with her network of colleagues was both direct and regular, in that “there’s lots of informal contact all the time”, she was uncertain about where she might belong in professional terms. She did not “especially identify with” colleagues in the registry, and her closest relationship was with an academic dean with part-time responsibilities for pastoral care. While she confessed that: “I don’t know who my peer group is... I need to go and find some

peers”, this did not appear to be a priority in the sense of a search for professional reinforcement (ie seeking membership of a recognised group, formal or informal, that might confer additional authority or status).

The approach of *unbounded professionals* to relationships is further characterised by a lack of status consciousness. Rather than referring to positions or titles in the organisational hierarchy, the three case individuals identified themselves via broad areas of activity, such as “work[ing] in student support”, and there was an unwillingness to be over-categorical. For instance, the student support manager repeatedly talked about “the stuff I do”, as if she was unwilling to be too precise about her location or activities. Furthermore, there was equivocation about the term “professional”, as implying elitism by the elevation of one group of workers from others, which could militate against a sense of common purpose:

“The word professional suggests that ...[for instance] volunteers [performing pastoral tutoring across the university] aren’t professional... there’s a kind of quality implied, which isn’t, isn’t right actually...” (student support manager).

A lack of concern about formal status reflected that fact that these staff constructed their identity through the task in hand, and through individual relationships, rather than via a public persona, as a representative of a specific function or office. For instance, the human resources officer cultivated her identity as “Annie”, deliberately using a diminutive form of her name, rather than promoting her formal identity as a member of the personnel office.

Rather than seeing themselves in terms of professional or organisational locations, *unbounded professionals* are characterised by their ability to enter the psychological space of, and take the part of, those with whom they come into contact. Thus, the enterprise manager conceptualises a new form of 'partnership' space by listening to and interpreting the requirements of potential partners inside and outside the university, and re-interpreting them in the context of the university's expanding local mission. He and external colleagues "educate" each other about their respective interests, by both giving and receiving information:

"I educate them about research, as they educate me about... business, the community and other social entities, the regeneration agenda... and all of that stuff".

Likewise, the human resources officer was able to interpret the responses of academic colleagues about the development activity she was conducting:

"I do management development with them, what I would call management development. They wouldn't call it that, so what they'd say and what I'd say are two very different things".

At the same time, she picked up discomfort when she spoke in the language of her own professional background, and was able to appreciate and anticipate others' responses to this:

"that's our jargon and that's our language... you can see they are fidgeting".

This manager recognised that a number of professional languages were being spoken, and that it was necessary to find a language that would "meet [colleagues] half way,

because they [too] have a language of their own, that has been developed culturally". This awareness of linguistic differences, which could contribute to competing perceptions between professional and academic staff, allowed her to detect difficulties that might arise if management development programmes were delivered using language that was not meaningful, and even alien, to the audience. She was able, therefore, to appreciate that perceptions of a programme's quality could depend on the process of delivery as well as content. Similarly, the enterprise manager's sensitivity to issues that were not directly articulated by his academic colleagues (page 199), enabled him to understand difficulties that might be encountered in promoting partnership agendas.

While the human resources officer could have restricted her activity to providing one-off courses on technical matters such as budgeting, by entering into dialogue with heads of department she was able to appreciate that support in peer group management would be helpful to them, although this requirement might not have been articulated as such. She recognises the tensions created for heads of department in managing their peers, and that a disciplinary problem may require not just an immediate solution, but the creation of lateral space, in which problems can be acknowledged safely. In this space, she sees conflict as being legitimate and "healthy", because it allows concerns to surface rather than being suppressed, so that they can be explored and debated. She is, therefore, acting as a nodal point between heads of department, the personnel function and university decision-making bodies, listening to and transmitting messages that may not be immediately apparent via formal communication channels.

Thus, the three *unbounded professionals* profiled in this chapter all spent time developing an understanding of the perceptions of the subjects of their projects: the student support manager about the anxieties of students with a disability or in financial difficulties; the human resources officer about the difficulties experienced by heads of department in managing their staff; and the enterprise manager about the multiple demands made on his academic colleagues. They were, therefore, endeavouring to establish their subjects' definition of a situation before deciding on a course of action, and might be said to be facilitating "communicative action", "oriented to reaching understanding", in the social "action situation" of Habermas' action types, in that their actions are:

"not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals ... [by] harmoniz[ing] their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions ... " (Habermas, 1984: 286).

Unbounded professionals are, therefore, more oriented to "coming to an understanding *with* [others]" than "exerting an influence *upon* others" (Habermas, 1984: 286), whereas *cross-boundary professionals*, with their facility for negotiating solutions, might be said to be more inclined towards the latter. For instance, the student recruitment manager at CampusU, page 166, works with potential applicants on schools visits in the sense of marketing the university to them, and the planning manager at CampusU, page 175, liaises between departments and the senior management team in order to shape departments' input to the institutional plan.

Thus, the people with whom *unbounded professionals* interact for the sake of their projects become “significant others” (Mead, 1934) with whom they conduct a dialogue, rather than a negotiation (as is more likely to be the case with *cross-boundary professionals*). In conducting such dialogue, *unbounded professionals* demonstrate that “In taking the part of other selves we become aware of the significance of their difficulties, problems and limitations” (McKinney, 1955). Furthermore, in prioritising their interactions with others over the technical imperatives of organisational structures or boundaries, they might be said to be “working to widen discursive modalities and opportunities within their university” (Barnett and Griffin, 1997: 176), contributing to “dialogical spaces” (Barnett, 2003: 201), and fostering “relationships and networks that are in a state of dynamic mutual evolution” (Barnett, 2003: 34).

Nevertheless, while the student support manager and the human resources officer, both at CampusU, were comfortable entering the space of academic colleagues, the enterprise manager was troubled by resistance he encountered among academic colleagues at NewU. Despite his awareness of academic viewpoints, he expressed frustration that he was, at times, associated with negative perceptions of “administration and management”:

“... it’s difficult when you are trying to do something with the best intentions for developing ... the university’s position [and] it feels like a lot of the time you get resistance and negativity. It feels like you’re always battling against... these value-driven kind of viewpoints about ... the quality of administration and management [and] bureaucracy...”

This comment suggests that, although his role had moved on to incorporate what might be described as institutional research and development activity, the enterprise manager had not achieved full recognition or legitimacy for this, and continued to be associated, in some quarters, with ideas of administration and management, as described in chapter one. This may also account for the fact that he had distanced himself from procedural work associated with research students (page 195).

Summary of *unbounded professionals*

Those categorised as *unbounded professionals*, not confined by organisational structures and boundaries, construct their identities, rather, via a focus on their extended projects. There is a sense in which they become their project, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. They therefore develop their roles in such a way that role and identity become synonymous, and work in such a way that their identities are not constrained by the performance of a pre-determined role (Goffman, 1990), so that a fixed job description would be permanently out-of-date. Furthermore, they continually modify this identity in the light of changing conditions in contemporary environments, “characterised by indeterminacy, partiality and complexity” (Taylor, 2008: 30).

In doing this, they build their own legitimacy as they go along, for instance being creative in relation to projects for which there are no precedents. They could, therefore, be said to represent the “creative class” of professionals (Florida, 2002) who are open to experience:

“[which] means lack of rigidity and permeability of boundaries in concepts, beliefs, perceptions and hypotheses. It means a tolerance for ambiguity ... the ability to receive much conflicting information without forcing closure upon the situation... openness of awareness to what exists ...” (Rogers, 1961: 348, quoted in Florida, 2002: 168-169).

In a UK context, they could also be said to reflect Middlehurst and Kennie’s idea of “A new professionalism” that involves “creative, multi-skilled and enterprising professionals”, who are capable of developing “long-term partnerships with many different kinds of clients” (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997: 67). In sociological terms they might be seen as the equivalents of utopians (Mannheim, 1936), who foster shifts of direction for the future, by listening and responding to the concerns of the community (Gramsci, 1971). By operating in this way, they are, in Archer’s terms, promoting institutional “interest” in their projects (Archer, 2000: 279).

Furthermore, those categorised as *unbounded professionals* become socialised into their projects, whereby they are able to take the part of others, be they students, academic colleagues or external partners. They demonstrate an awareness of sub-texts in the institution that may not be articulated in formal space, for instance the concerns of heads of department about managing people (the human resources officer), the anxieties of students with problems and disabilities (the student support manager), or the impact on academic staff of multiple and conflicting demands (the enterprise manager).

Thus, *unbounded professionals* work with the grain of local institutional contexts, offering the best solution for the time being, a process that is unlikely to be orderly or predictable. In doing this, they work opportunistically in situations that may be permanently unfinished and un-finishable, and that are, therefore, both “complex” and “unknowable” (Barnett, 2000a). In particular, they demonstrate an ability to accept and absorb dis-equilibrium, and even disorder. They are, therefore, holding things together for the time being, notwithstanding uncertain and unpredictable operating conditions externally, and possible lack of consensus internally, creating a form of practice that is characterised by the ability to improvise. Those categorised as *unbounded professionals*, therefore, might be said to complement *bounded* and *cross-boundary professionals* by an approach that contributes to institutional development in its widest sense, beyond, for instance, the provision of data in support of an evidence base to inform decision-making.

However, *unbounded* ways of working can be risky, both for the individual and for the institution. Despite a self-confidence about the way that they conducted their projects, all three *unbounded professionals* were breaking new ground, and exploring sensitive spaces, often without recourse to professional or organisational structures or precedents. They depended on their own constructions of a situation, setting their own goals, and building appropriate relationships. In situations where there are, for instance, narrow margins of error, there could be a risk, therefore, that *unbounded professionals* over-extend their projects so that they develop in an uncontrolled way, without account being taken of factors such as resource constraints, time deadlines, or audit requirements. Thus, a single project could either unbalance an institution's

overall activity profile or, conversely, fail, if it were too dependent on an enthusiastic manager who left the institution. Furthermore, a lack of sensitivity to disciplinary boundaries, and the appropriateness of different approaches when, for instance, implementing a project such as widening participation in an arts or science department, could bring its own difficulties. Too many *unbounded professionals*, therefore, without fixed job descriptions or other forms of definition, could become, or be regarded as, a liability.

Further comparisons between *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*

Unlike *bounded professionals*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* have opportunities for the exchange of both institutional intelligence and professional practice through extended professional networks. Both *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* have “strong” and “weak” ties within their institutions (Granovetter, 1973, 1974; quoted in Florida, 2002 (276-277)). “Strong ties” are apparent in one-to-one relationships with line managers or other key individuals and, in the case of *unbounded professionals*, within their project area. *Cross-boundary professionals* also have networks of “weak ties” external to their institutions, inside and outside the higher education sector, although they tend to be committed to staying within the sector. In the case of *unbounded professionals*, external ties tend to be to networks outside, rather than inside, the sector, and all three of the case examples had either worked outside, or expected to work outside, higher education. In respect of their external reference groups, both *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* might be seen, therefore, as “cosmopolitans” (Gouldner, 1957: 290).

While both *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* demonstrate greater mobility than *bounded professionals*, they can, in turn, be distinguished from each other, not only by their approach to institutional boundaries, but also by the contribution that each makes to their institution. On the one hand, *cross-boundary professionals* use their understandings of different types of space to reinforce overall institutional capacity as their institutions locate themselves in their environments, for instance by developing intelligence that will help to position the institution in international markets, by creating a cohesive institutional plan from the contributions of diverse academic departments, or establishing a “business environment” that can support the demands of a mass higher education market. They achieve these outcomes through “strategic action” (Habermas, 1984: 285), negotiating and arguing their case where necessary.

On the other hand, *unbounded professionals*, with their open-ended approach to extended projects, are more oriented towards institutional development for the future, (which does not mean that they will necessarily remain in the institution to carry through specific projects). Rather than arguing the case for immediate objectives, therefore, they tend rather to invest in the longer term, by endeavouring to establish common understandings between interest groups via “communicative action” that will help to create new spaces, knowledges and relationships (Habermas, 1984: 285). Thus, *cross-boundary professionals* might be seen as focusing on building capacity and capability to meet immediate and ongoing demands on the institution, particularly as they contextualise their activities externally, and *unbounded*

professionals might be seen more in terms of performing a research and development function, particularly in relation to the institution's own working environment.

Furthermore, although the identities of both *cross-boundary professionals* and *unbounded professionals* could be said to be "continuously under construction" (Taylor, 2008: 30), the former appear to be more explicit about this, for instance, by consciously planning possible career moves "through individual thought and reflection" (Taylor, 2008: 29). The identities of *unbounded professionals*, on the other hand, appear to evolve from their projects, and their involvement with the people that they are working with, so that although they are aware of career possibilities that might be open to them, and are likely to seize opportunities that come along, their approach appears to be less premeditated. Although they are dedicated to achieving outcomes for the groups with which they are involved, and therefore to the institution for the time being, they are, at the same time, open to possibilities that might arise outside the higher education sector, and appear to have less allegiance to it *per se* than do *cross-boundary professionals*. *Unbounded professionals*, therefore, grow their identities via their portfolio of experience, and the personal qualities (or agency) that they bring to that portfolio, and are confident that this combination will take them where they want to go.

Conclusion

For those categorised as *unbounded professionals*, boundaries neither represent defining parameters, as in the case of *bounded professionals*, nor a tool for the construction of identity, as in the case of *cross-boundary professionals*. Although

both *cross-boundary professionals* and *unbounded professionals* might be said to work in conditions of “weak boundary maintenance” in relation to the spaces they operate in, the structuring of their knowledge, and the organisation of their relationships (Bernstein, 1970: 61), the two are distinguished by the fact that *cross-boundary professionals* recognise and actively use boundaries, and the space on either side of them, for institutional capacity building and for their own career development. Boundaries, therefore, remain a defining mechanism for *cross-boundary professionals*, as they do for *bounded professionals*.

Although *unbounded professionals* may be obliged to take account of boundaries as conceived by others, they are less likely than *cross-boundary professionals* to enter political negotiations, for instance, in a competition for influence or resources. Individuals categorised as *unbounded professionals*, therefore, are likely to locate themselves in space that they themselves have created, in which they undertake “communicative” rather than “strategic” action (Habermas: 1984: 285). They distinguish themselves, rather, by their ability to work in conditions of fluidity, often acting as nodal points (Urry, 2003: 9-10) in extended networks (Castells, 2000: 469). Their space consists of recombinant knowledges and relationships, and is likely to be characterised by ongoing provisionality and redefinition. However, although they are creative in extending their projects, and thereby contributing to institutional development for the future, they may, at times, be insufficiently aware that boundary recognition is necessary. The following chapter reviews the relationship between the three categories of professional identified in the study and the structures and boundaries displayed by the three case institutions.

SECTION 4: BEYOND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

10: WORKING THE BOUNDARIES

Introduction

This chapter relates the examples of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* in the previous three chapters to the three case institutions, and demonstrates how professional staff work with different forms of boundary, particularly between professional and academic domains, at each institution. This in turn reflects that fact that identity is not only constructed by the individual, but also subject to framing by the institutional structures or “rules and resources” (Giddens, 1991).

At CampusU, a porous boundary between professional and academic domains facilitates joint working between colleagues from each domain; at MultiU, a solid boundary is used primarily as an organising structure to distinguish between professional and academic space, the former being designed to protect the latter; and at NewU, although there is evidence of the boundary being breached in places, the two domains are separated by a band of free space, which appears to facilitate the emergence of a “business environment”. At CampusU, therefore, the boundary between professional and academic domains is characterised by joint working; at MultiU, by differentiation between and containment of the two sets of activity; and at NewU, by the creation of a buffer zone between professional and academic space. Boundaries, therefore, can be used as both connecting and dividing mechanisms.

[**Note:** The profile of each institution includes a portrait of the head of administration, as these individuals are likely to have significant influence, not only on the appointment and development of professional staff, but also on the nature of institutional structures and boundaries.]

Identity possibilities

On the one hand, the three categories of professional described in chapters seven, eight and nine might be said to create their own identity possibilities by their approach to boundaries. Thus, in broad terms, *bounded professionals* draw their identities primarily from the structures in which they find themselves, voluntarily or involuntarily; *cross-boundary professionals* actively use boundaries to create superordinate identities across two or more spaces; and *unbounded professionals*, having a disregard for boundaries, create their own identity space through the projects with which they are involved. On the other hand, the degree of agency that professional staff are able to adopt is likely, also, to reflect the pliability of the boundaries they encounter, as well as their own predilections. This will be demonstrated in relation to each of the three institutions in turn.

Head of Administration: CampusU (characterised as an “unbounded professional”)

The head of administration at CampusU had taken a linear career path through academic administration in four pre-1992 institutions, including CampusU. His current role focused on institutional development, leading on initiatives such as the creation of a new campus, a research park, and programmes in health education. He spoke of CampusU in terms of its location in the higher education environment, and in particular the changing expectations of students. The diversification of university income streams was also a major challenge, requiring “the creativity... to identify the areas where we really ought to be working...” He recognised the interdependence of management and academic decisions, and that this required a holistic approach: “we obviously need somebody who’s telling you whether you’re keeping the books in line and doing the proper business planning... but you also need somebody who has the ability to say ‘yes that’s fine but this is not a solely cash-driven issue, and we need to look at a wider range of costs and benefits outside the straightforward financial ones’...”

In leading his staff, he was conscious of the risks presented by increasingly uncertain conditions: “...people will make mistakes, you have to accept that. Life is uncertain. You live with risk... you don’t jump on somebody because they have made a mistake or made a judgement which turns out to be wrong...” His perception was that academic staff saw professional staff primarily as “administrators”, and that there was some “academic arrogance” about the relationship, despite “local appreciation” of individuals. It was important, therefore, for professional staff to be proactive in “identifying the role we play”, using networking opportunities that were provided by the university’s “flat, accessible structure”. The interface between individual and institution, therefore, was a dynamic one: “an institution gets the best out of people in five to seven years...they might be very good for the first five years and solid for the next fifteen, but not necessarily stimulating and demanding and challenging, helping to drive the institution forward”. Thus, it was part of his role to “mobilise people”, where possible by rotating staff and enabling them to experience new challenges as they went along.

CampusU: "A delicate social contract"

The finance manager, a member of the senior management team at CampusU, characterised the relationship between academic and professional staff as "a delicate social contract". This was reflected in respondents' accounts of debates about, for instance, how widening participation and outreach activity might be developed without disturbing the institution's research and teaching reputations. These accounts tended to focus on the relationships between professional and academic staff, rather than on issues around organisational processes and structures. In developing these relationships, the finance manager saw the senior management team as working to ensure congruence between the two agendas:

" ... we, senior management, try to bridge this divide between [on the one hand] 'let's keep the core academics happy and the RAE is all important...' [and on the other hand] develop these massive activities [widening participation, regional partnership ...] " (finance manager).

He also saw the development of a dialogue about "where we are, what we're doing, why we're doing this, or what we might need to change" as one of the key elements of his job. He reached out to his academic colleagues to do this, receiving positive feedback that indicated that messages about institutional strategy were being received and understood:

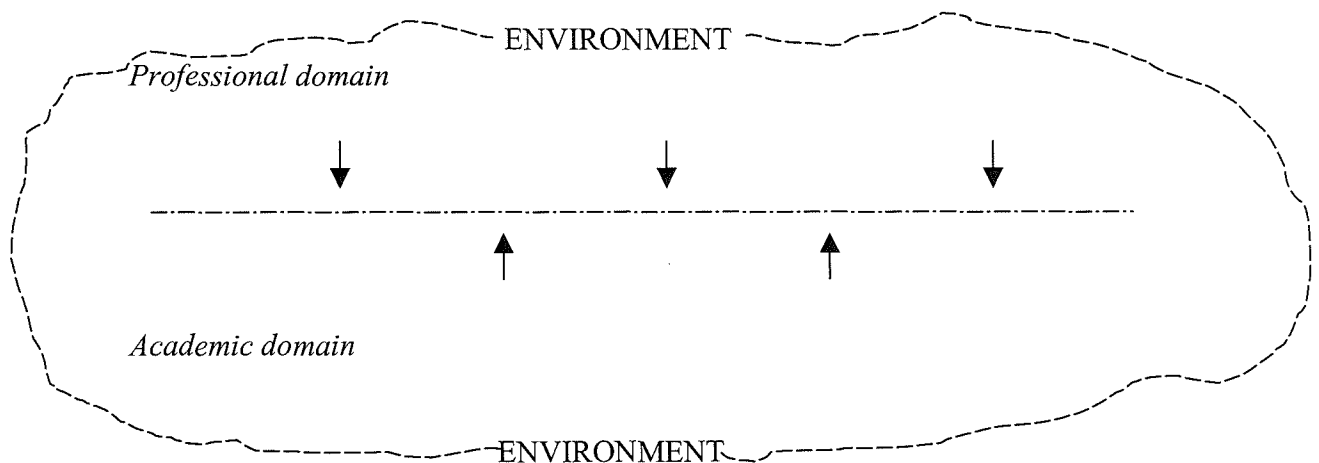
"I've had a few compliments recently... people saying 'we like your report', 'you explained this, etc etc'" (finance manager).

His approach reflected a recognition of the need to contextualise institutional activity in a complex and rapidly changing environment:

“We’re growing, not just in size, but in diversity and complexity. The world is infinitely more complex than it was ten years ago... you can’t have a finance director who is just number crunching, just looking at the bottom line... the world is much more complex” (finance manager).

The boundary between academic and professional domains at CampusU is illustrated in Figure 13:

Figure 13: The Boundary between Professional and Academic Domains at CampusU



Working across this boundary was described by two respondents as “bridge building”, and was exemplified by collaborative relationships:

“there is a very informal and relaxed relationship here between the heads of department, the academic departments, and the central senior management,

and I think quite a lot of mutual respect...you have to have open book relationships” (finance manager).

Dialogue was facilitated by a regular early evening meeting of heads of academic and professional departments, chaired by the vice-chancellor, and followed by refreshments. It was said by the head of administration to be “more useful for networking than anything else”. As an informal locale (compared with, say, a meeting of Senate), it provided space for collaborative thinking about possible future scenarios. In a more formal setting, the raising of potentially contentious developments would be likely to lead to a polarisation of views and establishment of positions, whereas by airing them in an informal environment, ground could be prepared. The meeting could be seen, therefore, as legitimising space in which the risks of proceeding or not proceeding could be considered, and opinions tested, before decisions were made.

Joint working was exemplified by the way that individuals moved between locales, in the case of the finance manager, between strategic issues affecting the university as a whole, and his specialist function:

“...operating on the outside of finance, to[wards] the university, and operating inside finance, having a very effective team... who pay people properly and have the right management information...” (finance manager).

Likewise, the planning manager entered the space of academic departments in producing, for instance, bids for funding:

“... so often the things that I am doing, the things that I’m suggesting and saying, are kind of leading on finding solutions, so it’s not as if [academic

colleagues] want something done, they call somebody in to sort of do or help them do it... It's more to do with providing guidance, direction, some actual hands-on support" (planning manager).

The planning manager would, for instance, produce a first draft of the bid, using both her own knowledge such as student numbers and research income, together with information drawn from academic documentation, such as a curriculum handbook. The draft would then be adjusted as necessary by interested parties such as the head of department and a pro-vice-chancellor, before being submitted to the senior management team for onward transmission to the funding body.

Conversely, understanding of management issues was becoming more evenly distributed across academic constituencies. For instance, heads of department were becoming more professionalised as managers via the management development programmes run by the human resources officer, page 192; and principal investigators, if they wished to undertake such research at less than economic cost, were obliged to make a business case to their head of department that the loss of overhead income should be borne by the department.

CampusU was also managing new, external interfaces, which had not been accorded priority in the past. Thus, one respondent referred to the institution's former "insularity", in which "the bigger picture hadn't pervaded"; another acknowledged that: "we'd never looked outside of here". One such interface was with a newly developed remote campus, that focused on programmes for non-traditional students in partnership with other providers, and about which there was a residual

conservatism, for instance by an academic administrator who displayed characteristics of a *bounded professional*:

“I’ve just about learned to accept the fact that there is no choice but to put up with all this ‘out there’ stuff, which is so complicated; the partnerships... I can see it’s the only way as an institution to ensure our survival ... [but] I still don’t like it” (academic administrator).

While the approach of this respondent was one of accommodation, the planning manager, by contrast, as a *cross-boundary professional*, took a more strategic view of the way that the new development would work in the context of overall institutional identity. Aware that it did not “fit into the existing culture”, she saw the initiative as likely to require some active change management, so that it became an integral part of the institution’s profile:

“I very strongly believe that what we need to try to do is to change the culture, not kind of sideline these activities, and I think that’s a real challenge for the university at the moment, as we’re expanding” (planning manager).

Significantly, this person’s background in a further and higher education college enabled her to understand the approaches adopted by the institutions with which the university was developing partnerships. The successful development of the external boundary, therefore, was likely to be contingent not only upon the formal incorporation of new space, but also on individuals who understood the terrain on the other side of the boundary, and could assist in integrating activities that originated there.

The challenge for CampusU, therefore, was to sustain the quality of its teaching and research profile at the same time as developing external partnership activity, and to promote understandings of this extended mission by continuing to foster interaction between professional and academic domains. This depended on individuals being able to maintain the “delicate social contract” that existed. There were, therefore, risks attached, and the joint working that had been achieved had a vulnerability, and even provisionality about it:

“... [the relationship between academic and professional staff] can easily break down... the wrong individual... comes in and starts saying a few wrong things, gets people’s backs up, that contract just disappears” (finance manager).

MultiU: Protecting academic space

MultiU was described by one manager as being “like a 1970s-style public sector institution”. Although, on the one hand, it had clearly defined functional departments and responsibilities, on the other, “people tend to bypass these” (manager of business unit), suggesting that formal structures worked against natural communication flows. In its devolved management structure, the senior management team, and a group of professional managers who work in functions such as finance, human resources and student services, represent Clark’s “steering core”, while in the “academic heartland” (Clark, 1995; 1998), departmental administrators are dispersed across academic departments, undertaking local functions such as planning and budgeting. The latter are perceived as “efficient and effective signposts for academics in ... department[s]” (manager of business unit). Nevertheless, the size of the institution meant that, to

Head of Administration: MultiU (characterised as a “bounded professional”)

A generalist who also had experience of finance and resources, the head of administration at MultiU had worked at the institution for most of her career, apart from a spell at a major research charity. She drew a clear distinction between academic and management activity, seeing the function of “the Administration” as being to “shield” the academic community from the requirements of “bureaucracy”, such as those imposed by external regulation and audit. A stable operating framework was regarded a prerequisite of this protection, and the dominant narrative referred to the creation of order and containment, via structures and procedures that would offer definition and certainty. Having an academic title, she saw herself as a “friend at court [by academic staff] ... the person who actually makes things happen”.

A sub-narrative, however, indicated tension about, for instance, which functions ‘belonged’ to the central administration and which ‘belonged’ to schools and departments, raising issues of ownership between academic and management space. An administrative review had, therefore, been established “To look at the interfaces... so that we can try and structure, these are the jobs that the centre does, these are the jobs that we expect to be done in departments, and these are the jobs that departments expect faculties to do and vice versa... so we all know what we are expecting”. While there was uneasiness about these interfaces, however, the response had been to move functions around within the same boundaries, rather than to explore boundary space itself as a legitimate locale for activity.

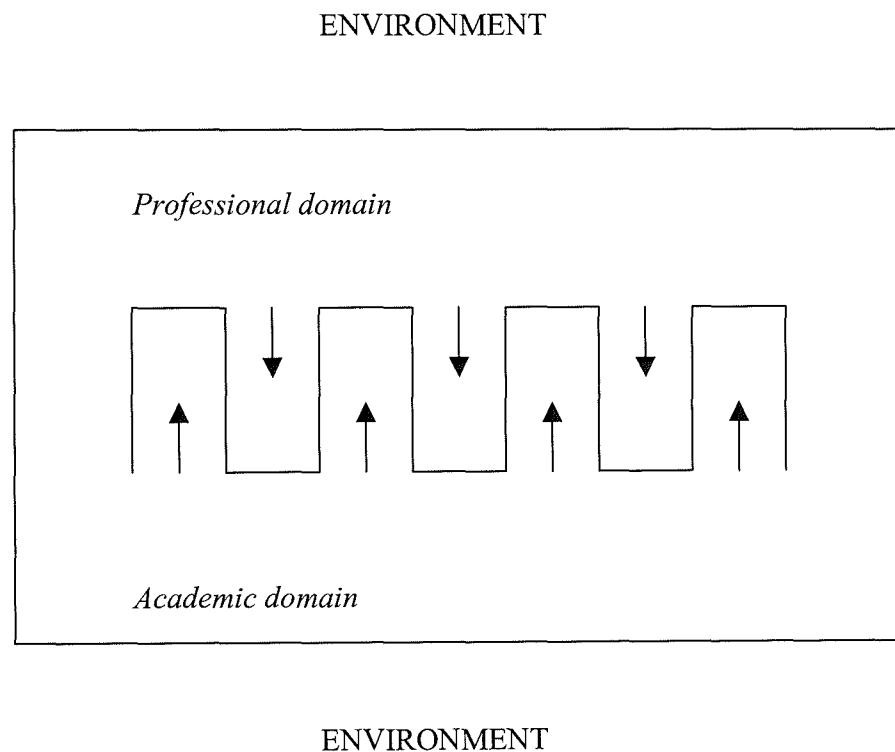
Boundaries were, therefore, perceived as providing organisational definition and control, rather than as spaces in their own right. Thus, a cross-boundary area such as widening participation was seen as a “cul-de-sac”, rather than as an opportunity for creating new forms of relationship or institutional knowledge. Furthermore, boundaries had the potential to become “cracks”, representing danger or a source of ambush, which the head of administration saw it as her role to prevent: “It’s my job to ensure that we don’t have ... things falling between the cracks...”

quote the human resources manager:

“... an awful lot of people ... don’t ever think of [MultiU] as a corporate thing. They think about their department; they think about their discipline”
(human resources manager).

The boundary between professional and academic domains at MultiU, as shown in Figure 14, therefore, tended to be a dividing, rather than a connecting, mechanism, and individuals found themselves obliged to occupy space at one side or the other of the boundary, rather than moving back and forth across it, or creating new space at

Figure 14: The Boundary between Professional and Academic Domains at MultiU



the boundary itself. This caused difficulties for individuals who were physically located on the 'wrong' side of the boundary, such as departmental administrators in academic departments, with the potential for divided, and even conflicted, identities (pages 154 and 156). Furthermore, although representatives of each domain penetrated into the others' territory in the formal sense that, for instance, the central administration was represented by administrators in academic departments, the boundary itself remained solid, with little evidence of it being breached, or of joint working occurring there. Pressure on the boundary from each domain is represented by the indentations in Figure 14.

Boundary tensions were recognised by senior professional staff, for instance with respect to the position of departmental administrators:

"Some of [the departmental administrators] find themselves between a rock and a hard place [and] are stuck in a way in that they've got a whole load of corporate policy to implement ... the academic managers [heads of department] are saying 'well that's fine, but what we want to achieve is this, so just do it, however you can do it, we don't care, just do this', and those people get very caught..." (personnel manager).

Similarly, there was recognition by the head of administration of an increasingly vocal second tier of managers, for instance, in finance and human resources, who kept up the pressure to participate in central decision-making, and felt frustrated if they were excluded:

"...if they didn't feel that they had a seat at the top table then they would get disgruntled. And they would go. There is no doubt about that, because they

need to feel that they have direct influence and that they can speak..." (Head of administration).

Furthermore, the vice-chancellor recognised the existence of boundary issues, was "keen to get people to see the bigger picture" (personnel manager), and had issued a consultation paper in which he suggested that:

"the brigading of human knowledge and expertise into departmental structures can (though does not necessarily) work against innovative interaction" (Vice-chancellor's consultation paper).

While this statement refers primarily to the containment of academic activity, it is equally applicable to the activities of professional staff, both in respect of boundaries between functions, between the central administration and professional staff in academic departments, and between professional staff themselves, located in different places.

To improve communication across professional and academic domains, attempts had been made by senior professional managers to reach out to academic departments by, for instance, the head of administration taking over the chair of the informal meeting of departmental administrators (pages 155 and 159), and by involving departmental administrators in providing input to the institutional strategic plan. Such moves were, however, in the face of resistance in academic departments to anything that might be seen as increased control from the centre. For instance, in the words of the head of administration, there had been "a riot" when it had been suggested that faculty accountants should report directly to the finance director rather than their dean, and a

compromise had been reached whereby they had a management reporting line to the dean, and a professional one to the finance director.

Furthermore, there was a sense among departmental administrators that their attempt to develop their own space via informal group meetings (pages 155, 159), in which they could exchange experiences and develop good practice, had been frustrated by the head of administration taking over the chair and introducing a formal timetable and minutes. While this step had been taken to try to improve communication, and to regularise the meetings in organisational terms, so that, to quote the head of administration, “we ... know the status of that [meeting]”, it did not appear to have significantly improved communication either between the centre and the periphery, or laterally, between professional staff.

Thus, despite a desire to address interface issues by senior managers in the central administration, potential solutions tended to be framed in terms of moving work around within existing structures, rather than rather than, for instance, considering ways in which new forms of space might be created and utilised:

“...[whether there is] any work that we can take off those people and bring to the centre and vice versa, that will make their life easier” (personnel manager).

Boundaries at MultiU, therefore, tended to be seen as problems to be addressed rather than opportunities for development. It would also appear that, because of anxiety about the possibility of friction at the interface between professional and academic domains, senior professional staff were reluctant to take any action that might disturb

this boundary, as if they were trying to “protect” the two groups from each other. This is reflected, for instance, in the head of administration’s concern about matters “fall[ing] between the cracks”, and about the centre and the departments knowing what each other is doing (page 222). In managing the interface between professional and academic domains, therefore, the impulse for senior professional managers at MultiU appeared to be to avoid any blurring of this boundary whereby conditions might become ambiguous or uncertain, or in Land’s terms, “liminal”: “a transformative state that engages existing certainties and renders them problematic and fluid” (Land, 2008: 140).

Significantly, also, none of the respondents at MultiU mentioned the boundary between the institution and the external environment, except in terms of the imposition of audit and legislative requirements, from which academic staff were to be “shielded” (head of administration, page 222). No mention was made, for instance, of the challenges of the market, widening participation activity or local partnerships, and in that respect the institution seemed insulated from its environment. Although the mission of MultiU did not necessarily prioritise such developments, it could also be that the external boundary represented “liminal” or risky space (Land, 2008: 140).

At MultiU, therefore, the boundary between professional and academic domains appeared to be used to preserve the ‘purity’ of academic space. In contrast to CampusU, there did not appear to be a forum where potentially contentious issues could be discussed and pre-digested. Despite acknowledgement of boundary issues,

there was a tendency to reinforce boundaries as a form of control, with indications of strain in the narratives of all the staff interviewed there. The challenge for MultiU, therefore, was to facilitate more permissive boundary conditions, whereby “innovative interaction”, as described in the vice-chancellor’s consultation paper, might occur more freely.

NewU: A business system

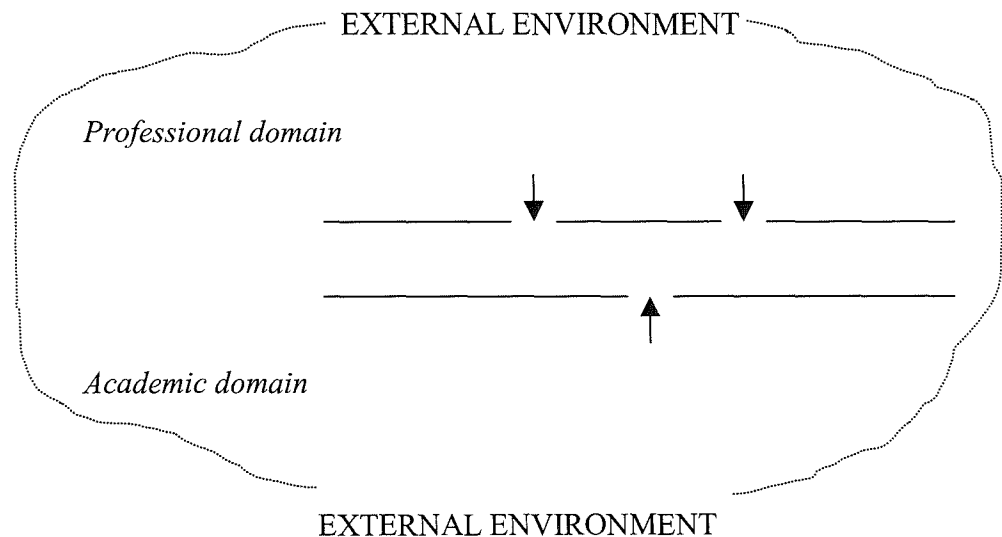
Although the boundaries between professional and academic domains at CampusU and MultiU were differently characterised in terms of their permeability, the narratives of professional staff in both these institutions demonstrated a keen awareness of academic issues and agendas. By contrast, at NewU, there appeared to be a gap, as well as a boundary, between professional and academic domains, and it was noticeable that, apart from the enterprise manager, respondents seemed less aware of the mindsets of their academic colleagues. When asked about their relationships with the latter, they tended to see these in functional terms. For instance, the finance manager at NewU focused on the technical aspects of his dealings with heads of schools and departments:

“A lot of the significant contact that we have with academic managers is in terms of how they manage their financial resources ... we have to have an oversight in that and report to the requisite authorities”.

Respondents’ narratives, therefore, centred on the functions for which they were responsible, and where there was acknowledgement of the broader institutional setting, this tended to be seen in terms of the politics between different sites. Thus,

professional and academic activity appeared to proceed on parallel tracks, as shown in Figure 15. Rather than being separated by a unitary boundary, the two domains are, distanced from each other by a band of free space. Although there are occasions when the boundary is breached, it is less porous than at CampusU, and joint working is not well developed:

Figure 15: The Boundary between Professional and Academic Domains at NewU



Because of the narrow resource margins within which the institution was operating, small adjustments in public funding regimes, or shifts in the market, were likely to have a critical effect. More than one respondent suggested that as a “clearing” university, serving a mass higher education market, NewU depended for its existence on the information system, without which “[staff] wouldn’t get paid... and students

wouldn't get certificates... every facet [of activity] would cease to happen" (information systems manager). The web-enabled system, therefore, was relied upon to provide technical solutions to both teaching and learning, and management, problems. However, it also had the potential to militate against face-to-face dialogue across professional and academic domains, which tended to be restricted to "a few tame academics" who "are IT literate" (information systems manager).

Furthermore, the gap between professional and academic domains appeared to have allowed business-oriented agendas, as articulated by the information systems manager and the student services manager (pages 172 and 180), to emerge. Thus, the information services manager's team had been able to colonise this space:

"... they [the senior management team] trust people like me to just go away and do it.... What areas we target for development are left to us... I decide those things with the functional managers, so they'll come to me with ideas. We have a finite amount of resource, and we as a group decide which path to go down" (information systems manager).

This contrasts with the situation at MultiU, for instance, where there was nervousness about professional activity that took place outside formally accredited institutional space, or outside the direct purview of the senior management team.

As acknowledged by the information systems manager, a challenge for NewU was to develop the dialogue with academic (and other) colleagues about information system requirements, so as to:

Head of Administration: NewU (characterised as a “cross-boundary professional”)

The head of administration at NewU had worked in a variety of roles in two pre-1992 institutions before being appointed to her newly created post, which had broader line management responsibilities than the predecessor post of clerk to the governing body. She had established her identity across professional and academic domains, so that the senior management team “had to get used to the idea that the university secretary ... would have her say, and that I might not just be interested merely in which was happening in the administration; that I’d have views on academic issues, and views on research, and all those other things that I’d done in my life”. The cross-boundary nature of her terrain created a situation in which “a PVC realises that... the university secretary might be part of his faction on an academic matter, and not be worried about whatever it is he ... thought I might be worrying about.”

She saw the use of the business information system as central to the organisation and management of the university: “so much in all the areas in university management are now related to computer systems... it’s very, very portable. You can do it anywhere”. She also saw political skills as critical, because “you’ve got to negotiate your whole life into getting people to follow university policy ... In a similar situation in a commercial company you could go out and say ‘you will do this’. And you know there’s no point in doing that here...” This also meant being astute enough to know how and when a professional contribution might be made: “There are slightly different variations: ... the ‘I could make this decision but ... it might be outside my remit’, and there’s ‘I could perfectly easily make this decision ... but I know that the vice-chancellor would rather make it’.”

She saw generic changes occurring in roles and career paths of professional staff, who were increasingly concerned with the “visible stuff”, such as the management and presentation of projects. She expected them to be able to “move in and out into different areas”, to “be creative” with respect to “rules” and structures, and to form their own views. In addition, because the university was a system within wider national and global systems, in an increasingly open environment, she considered that the ability to look for both market and policy “clues” about the future, and to contextualise these locally, was a crucial aspect of the contribution of professional staff to their institution.

“... open up the discussion across the whole university about what it is we have to do to run the business, and what development we can do over and above that, and get academics and administrators alike to actually influence the decision-making” (information systems manager).

This aspiration, however, appeared to be on the basis of public accountability requirements, rather than a specific desire for articulation between academic and management agendas:

“I’ll be on the one level quite nervous about what will come back, but I think we should do it... particularly with the openness requirement of government and the spending of public money...” (information systems manager).

Nevertheless, as at CampusU, and in contrast to MultiU, there was awareness of a need to find ways of addressing the university’s changing role in an increasingly unstructured and unpredictable environment:

“the environment is significantly more complex than it was even five years ago... The emphasis to try to make money for the university means that they do all sorts of funny things to bring in extra cash ... and the other big complexity thing that we’ve got, the latest higher education thing seems to be collaboration [with external partners], which is just an absolute nightmare” (information systems manager).

Thus, all three institutions had boundary issues. At CampusU, attention was being given to establishing external relationships that replicated joint working internally, at MultiU relationships between professional staff in academic departments and the

centre were under review, and at NewU there was awareness of the desirability of a closer dialogue between professional and academic domains. A summary of institutional characteristics is given in Figure 16:

Figure 16: Summary of Institutional Characteristics

Institution Characteristics	CampusU	MultiU	NewU
Dominant boundary feature	Relationships/networks	Formal structures and processes	Business information system
Senior management team Objectives	Institutional development in context of environment	Protection of academic space	Managing the business
Dominant identity characteristics	Joint working across boundaries	Potential for fractured identity if in 'wrong' space	Isolation of professional and academic domains
Boundary risks as perceived by senior management team	Loss of "delicate social contract"	Loss of structural/functional definition	Failure of business information system
Suggested challenges for the future	To avoid restrictive/divisive boundaries (eg at interface with external partners)	To recognise the potential of joint working across boundaries	To reduce gap at boundary between academic and professional activity

The relationship between respondent identities and institutions

A summary of respondent identities, categorised according to the typology of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* (shown on page 140), in relation to each case institution, is given in Figure 17.

There are significant differences in the balance between the three categories of staff at the case institutions. At CampusU, the ratio between *bounded professionals* and the other two groups of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* is 2:7 (22%); at MultiU it is 7:1 (87%), and at NewU it is 3:4 (43%), suggesting that the mobility of professional staff across boundaries is greatest at CampusU and least at MultiU.

Figure 17: Summary of Respondent Identities

Typology of identities from page 140	CampusU	MultiU	NewU	Totals
Bounded professionals	2 (22.2%)	7 (87%)	3 (43%)	12 (50%)
Cross-boundary professionals	4 (44.4%)	1 (13%)	3 (43%)	8 (33.3%)
Unbounded professionals	3 (33.3%)	0	1 (14%)	4 (16.6%)
Totals	9 (99.9%)	8 (100%)	7 (100%)	24 (99.9%)

As institutional environments, MultiU is the most strongly bounded. There is a clear awareness by professional and academic domains of each other, but the well-defined boundary is characterised by tautness and tension, and used predominantly to provide functional definition and containment. All but one of the respondents at MultiU were categorised as *bounded professionals*. These could be divided into two groups: those

who created and sustained their own boundaries, and those who appeared to be confined by the organisational boundaries that they encountered, despite endeavouring to cross them. Furthermore, organisational boundaries at MultiU appeared to lead directly to a sense of professional isolation among respondents.

The boundary between professional and academic domains was most relaxed at CampusU, facilitating joint working at and across the boundary. A flat organisational structure, and relatively short lines of communication, may also have fostered collaboration. The predominance of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* at CampusU, and shorter average length of service of respondents than at the other two institutions, may be attributed to the head of administration's flexible and developmental approach to his staff; to the appointment of staff with a capability for innovation and mobility; and to a permissive approach to the space they were allowed to occupy, from the vice-chancellor downwards. Furthermore, joint working seemed to be facilitated by the tacit agreement that professional staff were, for public consumption, known as 'administrators'.

At NewU, four of the seven respondents were categorised as *cross-boundary* or *unbounded professionals*. The boundary between professional and academic domains incorporated a band of free space, which allowed a "business environment", as articulated by the information systems manager and the student services manager, not only to emerge, but to achieve some status in its own right. Although there was potential for collaboration at the boundary, this was not well developed. Professional

and academic domains were relatively isolated from each other, and this may have facilitated the emergence of a “business environment”.

As shown in Figure 18, there was also variation between institutions in the way that individuals described themselves when asked if they saw themselves as ‘managers’ or ‘administrators’:

Figure 18: Respondents’ Self-Perceptions as ‘Administrator’ or ‘Manager’

Self-categorisation as ‘administrator’ or ‘manager’	CampusU	MultiU	NewU	Totals
‘Administrator’	2	5	0	7
‘Manager’	7	3	7	17
Totals	9	8	7	24

At CampusU, where joint working with academic colleagues co-existed with a traditional academic administration, seven of the nine people interviewed saw themselves primarily as managers, although two of these noted that within the institution they would be seen as administrators. At MultiU, the clear distinction between professional and academic domains, and the existence of traditional service relationships, may contribute to the fact that a majority of five out of the eight respondents regarded themselves primarily as administrators. NewU’s inheritance of a more management-oriented culture from its former status as a polytechnic may account for the fact that all seven respondents saw themselves as managers, despite the fact that they were known collectively as ‘The Administration’. A comparison of Figures 17 and 18 (pages 234 and 236), shows that while *bounded professionals* may

see themselves as either administrators or managers, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* are less likely to see themselves as administrators.

In terms of membership of professional associations, of the twenty-four interviewees in the case studies, six belonged to the Association of University Administrators, nine to other higher education associations, and eleven to external professional bodies (twenty-six memberships altogether) (Figure 19):

Figure 19: Membership of Professional Bodies

	Association of University Administrators (AUA)	Other higher education associations eg ARG, AMOSSHE	Specialist professional groups eg CIPD, CIPFA	Total memberships
CampusU (n=9)	4	5	3	12
MultiU (n=8)	0	0	3	3
NewU (n=7)	2	4	5	11
Total	6	9	11	26

Notes: (i) some individuals belong to more than one body; others to none
(ii) ARG = Academic Registrars' Group; AMOSSHE = Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education; CIPD = Chartered Institute of Personnel Directors; CIPFA = Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Despite the difficulty of drawing conclusions from a small sample, it may be significant that although there was an even spread of memberships across CampusU and NewU, only three individuals at MultiU belonged to a professional body, and none of these bodies were specifically oriented to higher education. Furthermore, the five individuals in the study with no memberships were all located at MultiU, suggesting the lack of a broader sense of identity in relation to what was going on

elsewhere in the sector, and possibly reflecting the sense of isolation in the narratives, and the predominance of *bounded* identities.

Theorising the influence of institutional structures

Drawing on Archer, the characteristics of the three institutions might be theorised in terms of the three scenarios that she describes as “pre-modernity”, “modernity” and “high modernity” (Archer, 2000: 270-277), each of which affect, in different ways, the ability of those working in them to self-organise as agents. In the pre-modern scenario, represented by MultiU, a small number of “elite” corporate agents (such as the senior management team or heads of department) assign others to the position of primary agents (such as the departmental administrators), whose positioning is therefore involuntary, and they are unable to “articulate projects nor mobilise for their attainment” (Archer, 2000: 271) (as in the attempt to establish an informal meeting of departmental administrators, pages 155, 159 and 225). Thus, MultiU’s relatively impermeable structures and boundaries might be seen as reflecting Archer’s “monolithic form of social organisation” (Archer, 2000: 270), in which the status quo is reinforced, and service relationships persist.

In the scenario of modernity, more people have the possibility of becoming agents (that is, agency is no longer restricted to an elite). Corporate agency, or collective action, emerges in the form of interest groups that are clearly differentiated and relatively autonomous from each other, as demonstrated, for instance, in the distance between professional and academic constituencies at NewU. In these circumstances, interest groups are “preoccupied with self-definition, self-assertion and self-

advancement” (Archer, 2000: 273), as they endeavour to establish themselves on their own terms in a political environment. Thus, the information systems manager (page 172) and student services manager (page 180) were representatives of an interest group advancing a “business management” approach at NewU.

Insofar as CampusU demonstrates the “co-existence of a plurality of corporate agents” (Archer, 2000: 278), in which greater numbers of people have the opportunity to organise and articulate their interests, it might be said to represent a scenario of high modernity. Groups of agents are characterised by a “reciprocity of mutual influence” (Archer, 2000: 276), as illustrated, for instance, by the narrative of the finance manager (page 216). Communication was facilitated by the fact that professional staff were included in the vice-chancellor’s weekly meeting with heads of department, and that functional offices were physically located across the campus. The head of administration, also, had a significant influence in integrating professional staff into the “plurality of interest groups” (Archer, 2000: 278). Regarded by his colleagues as a team member as well as a line manager, he trusted them to make independent, professional judgements, even if they made some mistakes.

It may be that an institution such as CampusU, that had made a positive decision to diversify and extend its activities, around which interest groups had developed, may have moved subconsciously in the direction of “high modernity”, described by Archer as exemplifying an open system, in which difference and diversity is recognised. CampusU may, therefore, have had the greatest impetus for boundaries to

be relaxed, enabling staff who were participating in joint working to have more influence, described by Archer as “enablement” or “leverage” (Archer, 2000: 285), over their own, and institutional, identities. Similarly, at NewU, resource constraints had brought pressure to extend the business partnership aspects of its long-standing mission of service to the local community. However, at MultiU, there was less stimulus for change, the priority being to preserve its status as an internationally-rated research institution, although there was evidence of a desire on the part of the vice-chancellor and senior management team to achieve greater interaction between academic disciplines, and between the centre and the periphery.

Thus, the fact that the student recruitment manager at CampusU (page 166) was able to transform a more process-oriented admissions role into *cross-boundary* activity, although attributable to his own initiative in developing a more externally-oriented portfolio associated with recruitment, is likely also to be attributable to the more malleable boundary at CampusU. If he had been at MultiU, for instance, it might not have been possible for him to be categorised as a *cross-boundary professional*. However, if conditions at MultiU were to change, and the possibility of working collaboratively emerged for professional staff, while some *bounded professionals* such as the departmental administrators would welcome this opportunity, others, such as the academic administrator, page 147, might wish to continue in their *bounded* approaches. The development of agency, therefore, depends on individuals wanting to have an “inner conversation” with themselves in constructing their identities (Archer, 2000: 10), as well as their having the opportunity.

In terms of Archer's three scenarios, therefore, the distribution of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* between the three institutions, as shown in Figure 20, would appear to indicate that:

- *Bounded professionals* are likely to predominate in conditions of "pre-modernity" but may also tolerate conditions of "modernity".
- *Cross-boundary professionals* are likely to cluster in conditions of "modernity" and "high modernity".
- *Unbounded professionals* are likely to flourish in conditions "high modernity", and are unlikely to tolerate conditions of "pre-modernity".

Figure 20: Typology of Professionals vis-à-vis Institutional Types

Typology of identities from page 140	"Pre-Modernity" MultiU	"Modernity" NewU	"High Modernity" CampusU	Totals
Bounded professionals	7 (87%)	3 (43%)	2 (22.2%)	12 (50%)
Cross-boundary professionals	1 (13%)	3 (43%)	4 (44.4%)	8 (33.3%)
Unbounded professionals	0	1 (14%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (16.6%)
Totals	8 (100%)	7 (100%)	9 (99.9%)	24 (99.9%)

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the different boundary characteristics of the three institutions, particularly in relation to the interface between professional and academic domains. While these differences may be partly the result of factors such as history, geography and mission, they are also likely to be influenced by the approach of the head of administration in leading their professional staff. Thus, at CampusU, joint working between professional and academic domains is facilitated by a tacit understanding by both constituencies that management activity is disguised as 'administration'. At MultiU, this boundary is invoked to protect academic space, and a situation exists whereby 'management', which is focused in the central administration, is clearly distinguished from 'administration', which tends to be located in academic departments, where departmental administrators were hesitant about describing what they did as 'management'. At NewU, professional and academic activity have a band of free space between them. Although there is potential for joint working in this space, it appears, rather, to have facilitated the development of what respondents described as a "business environment".

Thus, at CampusU, individuals such as the student support manager and human resources officer, described in chapter nine as *unbounded professionals*, are able to explore and develop space between professional and academic activity, in student welfare and management development respectively. By contrast, at MultiU, individuals such as departmental administrators can find themselves confined in the 'wrong' space, and unable to cross structural boundaries to become *cross-boundary professionals*. At NewU, the potential exists for joint working to increase, as

demonstrated by the enterprise manager, although it could be that the emergence of a business environment would militate against this.

These boundary variations between the three institutions have implications not only for institutional and individual identities, but also for the legitimacy accorded to the activities of professional staff. These legitimacies will be explored in the following chapter.

11: RE-LEGITIMISING IDENTITIES

Introduction

This chapter reviews the legitimacies associated with the concepts of ‘administration’ and ‘management’, as defined in chapter one, and relates these to theories of organisational authority. It goes on to consider how professional staff are emerging who, through *cross-boundary* and *unbounded* ways of working, are constructing legitimacies that derive less from the maintenance of processes and systems than from their active contribution to institutional capacity building and development. By adopting a flexible approach to spaces, knowledges and relationships, these staff are creating a “fifth” dimension to the “hard” and “soft” quadrants of “administration” and “management”, described in Figure 1 on page 31. It is further suggested that, not only have the roles of a significant proportion of professional staff become less prescribed, but also that a lack of recognition or acceptance of this in contemporary institutions means that such staff are obliged to negotiate their legitimacy on an ongoing basis.

Legitimacies deriving from administration and management

Legitimacy is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “being lawful”, and in an organisational context is associated with the concepts of authority vis-à-vis, for instance, the taking of decisions and the allocation of resources. Weber’s classic account (1946) distinguishes between legal-rational, traditional and charismatic types of authority. The former involves formal regulatory procedures, established by public consent, that characterise bureaucracies, whereas traditional authority derives rather

from custom and practice, and charismatic authority from observance of the views or directives of an individual who has achieved a dominant position. The legitimacies traditionally associated with the “hard” and “soft” quadrants of “administration”, and the “soft” quadrant of “management”, as described in the diagram on page 31, are based on the assumption that the authority of professional staff derives principally from legal-rational sources, involving institutional consensus, although there may also be elements of custom and practice. In this scenario, an individual’s authority would be subject to the checks and balances imposed by institutional governance arrangements. Within the “hard management” quadrant, however, there may also be evidence in contemporary institutions of decisions made in relation to, for instance, market conditions, by managers (academic and/or professional) who have close knowledge of the implications of these conditions for their institution.

Organisations have been further described as having a number of sources of power (for instance, Johnson and Scholes, 1993: 178-182; Handy, 1993: 185-191) that, in different ways, provide authority for the actions of individuals. Handy’s account refers to four such sources:

- *Resource power*, held by key individuals at the centre of a *power culture*, which represents a web, whereby “control is exercised by the centre, largely through the selection of key individuals, by occasional forays from the centre or summonses to the centre. It is a political organisation in that the decisions are taken very largely on the outcome of a balance of influence rather than on procedural or purely logical grounds” (Handy, 1993: 184).

- *Position power*, which is conferred on individuals by their location in a *role culture*. This has clear “procedures for roles”, such as job descriptions and specifications, “procedures for communications”, and “rules for the settlement of disputes” (Handy, 1993: 185). These structures might be said to correspond to Giddens’ “rules and resources” (Giddens, 1991).
- *Expert power*, conferred on individuals by their location in a *task culture*, which represents a matrix or net, so that “much of the power and influence lies at the interstices of the net, at the knots” (Handy 1993: 188). Such working arrangements are suited to “project teams or task forces ... formed for a specific purpose and ... reformed, abandoned or continued” (Handy, 1993: 188), and influence is dispersed across the organisation.
- *Personal power*, exercised by individuals in a *person culture*, which comprises “clusters” of autonomous individuals, whereby power is diffuse, and shared between the individuals concerned. In this situation, the organisation only exists insofar as it is the sum of these individuals, rather than through the creation of a superordinate organisational framework (Handy, 1993: 189-190).

While elements of all four cultures and power sources may be identified at the level of an individual institution, this study suggests that task and person cultures, traditionally associated with academic activity, are also emerging for professional staff as they become increasingly involved in activities that contribute to institutional capacity building and development.

Legitimacies of administration

The legitimacies traditionally associated with administration, as defined in chapter one, derive principally from an obligation to provide disinterested advice with respect to governance and regulatory issues, thereby maintaining academic and institutional standards. This advice is likely to be constructed with reference to established “rules and resources” (Giddens, 1991), although there is scope for discretion in interpreting regulatory requirements:

“you’re told what you can do in terms of the regulations, and the good administrator tells you, despite that, we can do this by doing x, y and z ...”
(Head of administration, CampusU).

Any member of staff in a similar role would be expected to offer similar advice, with “detached analysis” (Kiloh, 1994: 10), implying a generic identity, which is not unique to the individual:

“... the anonymous ... role of the high official, which derives from an environment that is deliberately protected from personal political involvement” (Self, 1972: 180).

In Hall’s terms, therefore, individuals operating in an administrative mode are characterised more by “sameness” than by “difference” (Hall, 1996: 3). Thus, in its purest form, administration may have the effect of suppressing agency in support of the structures and boundaries it maintains, and from which its legitimacy derives. Individual contributions are downplayed to the extent that they may appear to emanate from someone else (for instance, an academic manager such as a dean who takes ownership of a brief provided by an administrative colleague). A number of

respondents referred to parallels with the civil servant “Sir Humphrey” in the television comedy “Yes Minister”, whereby certain forms of behaviour are learnt and performed:

“...administrators were expected to be seen and not heard, not to speak at a committee, except perhaps the registrar, and then only when asked to give an opinion, you know, ‘Registrar, can you remind us of the Regulations’ or something ...” (Head of administration, pre-1992 institution, pre-case study interviews).

Nevertheless, the suppression of visible agency may also be used to exercise control behind the scenes while remaining inscrutable:

“...there is that thing about actually finding out from people what it is they think without giving a lot away” (Head of administration, NewU).

This model reflects “academic civil service” assumptions about the roles of university administrators, who are not explicitly accorded formal decision-making powers, although they may exercise influence:

“They [administrators] formulate issues and arguments, they count, they inform, and they render all necessary services to their masters, but they have to act in accordance with decisions which they have no formal powers to determine” (Moodie and Eustace, 1974: 157).

This statement, taken from Moodie and Eustace’s text *Power and Authority in British Universities*, provides a benchmark for considering possible movements in the legitimacies associated with contemporary professional staff.

Legitimacies of management

When asked to describe their management activity, those who considered themselves to be managers tended to see this in more active terms than ‘administration’, for instance, as the ability to influence the shape of structures and outcomes, as well as maintaining processes. Thus, while administration was described in terms of ensuring reliable service standards, management was seen, rather, as the difference between “oil[ing] the machine”, and “designing the machine differently”, thereby “making a difference [to outcomes] ... not just making it work” (post-1992 head of administration, pre-case study interviews). Another pre-1992 head of administration referred to management as involving choice and discretion on the part of the individual, and the responsibility and accountability that flows from this:

“administrative processes imply a lack of choice and discretion ... [but] when ... you’ve got responsibility for budgets, and you’ve got discretion over how people spend their time, you’re actually managing something ... where you could actually choose to do that or you could choose to do the other”.

Thus, while ‘administration’ would appear to imply service to others, and the effective application of pre-determined processes, systems or resources, ‘management’ suggests a more active contribution by an individual to decisions and outcomes. However, such agency may be exercised in different degrees. Thus, a finance manager may use position or expert power in a negative way to veto a development because it represents too great a financial risk. He or she may also be involved in actively seeking additional income streams, in ways that are either “curtailed” (Barnett, 2005: 57), by university policies about the nature and locale of

entrepreneurial activity that it wishes to undertake, or “unbridled” (Barnett, 2005: 57), in that the individual is authorised to secure the maximum financial return for the university, by whatever means. In the latter case, they might be seen as moving beyond the authority conferred by position or expert power, and to be exercising personal power, adopting a “managerial” approach, as described in the neo-liberal literature reviewed in chapter two.

The fact that ‘management’ encompasses a range of possibilities may account for reservations about what it means in an academic context. In the words of the head of administration at NewU: “You can’t actually say to anyone ‘you will go out and do this’”, and of the planning manager at CampusU: “You can’t make anybody do anything unless they think it’s a good idea”. There therefore remains sensitivity to the connotations of power and control that ‘management’ might imply, and caution about a direct substitution of ‘management’ for ‘administration’. Thus, on the one hand, a pre-1992 head of administration claimed that:

“...the term ‘administrator’ is pejorative, is unfortunate, and is non-aligned with what is actually happening in other occupational areas ... we should get away from it because I think it doesn’t do us credit any more... I’m literally banning that from the vocabulary”.

On the other hand, the same head of administration had replaced the “The Administration” as a collective descriptor of professional staff by “Professional Services”, thus preserving the word “service”. This suggests that, notwithstanding his views about the role of professional staff as ‘managers’, he retained an awareness,

although this was not explicitly articulated, that the use of the term 'management' could be perceived as implying the involvement of professional staff in activities that exceeded the authority conferred on them. Even at NewU, where clear management space had emerged, it had been decided to use the collective term of 'Administration' for professional functions:

"We call[ed] them The Administration because we couldn't think of anything better... We disagreed on every other term... Professional Services had that sort of slight connotation of prostitution, which we didn't really like... so we ended up with The Administration" (Head of administration, NewU).

Possibly because of these reservations, contemporary management tends to be couched in terms of a negotiated relationship with academic colleagues, and the idea of "partnership" was invoked by a number of respondents:

"It's this notion of partnership, that we're working in this together; ... you know, 'I am perfectly happy for you to get all the kudos for that, but I'm not necessarily going to hide completely behind' " (Head of administration, CampusU).

There is a sense, therefore, in which administration and management are co-dependent, and whereby 'administration' may be invoked to achieve legitimacy for 'management'. The terms 'administration' and 'administrator', therefore, continue to have currency in contemporary institutions and, as at CampusU, may be actively adopted to modulate overtones of direction and control that might be associated with 'management'.

Nevertheless, there would appear to be greater openness about the use of 'management' terminology in the post-1992 sector, exemplified by one head of administration, who felt that he was using a different type of language when he moved from the pre-1992 to the post-1992 sector:

"... I now find [in a post-1992 university] I don't censor myself anywhere near so much, but I used to heavily censor my language so that ... I wouldn't talk too often about customers or prices or sales, things like that, ... you always find other university-type words to describe them..."

This corroborates the findings in the study that management activity at NewU, a post-1992 institution, took place in space that was not only clearly distinguished from academic space, but was also distanced from, rather than being contiguous with, academic activity. Possibly because the two domains operated in parallel, managers could be more explicit in talking about "hard" aspects of management activity, such as decisions driven by numerical and financial indicators, both in the interviews and in their day-to-day work.

Between management and administration, there would, therefore, appear to be a spectrum of legitimacies, deriving from:

- The maintenance of regulatory standards and practices within an established framework.
- The discretion to make decisions and to determine outcomes at local or institutional level, within a legal-rational or traditional authority framework.
- The discretion to make decisions and to determine outcomes on the basis of, for instance, an individual's knowledge of institutional markets, although

such activity may, on occasion, be subject to challenge as being outwith formal authority frameworks.

The authority base for this spectrum of legitimacies is reviewed in the following section.

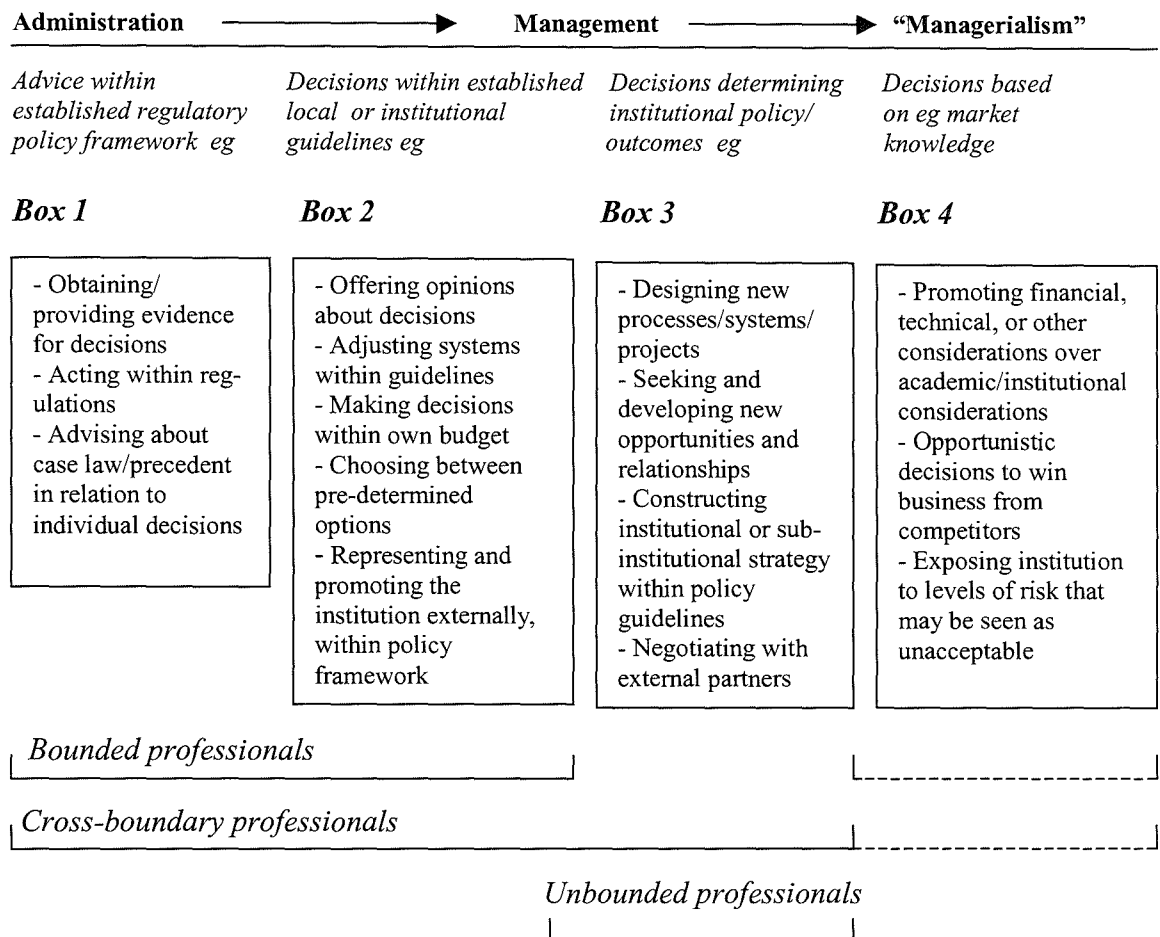
A continuum of authority for decision-making

The legitimacies outlined above might, using the statement by Moodie and Eustace, page 248, as a baseline, be plotted around an individual's input to decision-making, as shown in Figure 21 (page 254). At one end of the continuum, pure 'administration' would imply limited authority to make decisions within a regulatory framework (Box 1). 'Management' could incorporate authority to make decisions within local or institutional guidelines or systems (Box 2), and also the authority to make decisions that influence institutional policies and outcomes (Box 3). The latter might include, for instance, the design of an institutional resource allocation model, which could have far-reaching implications for individual academic departments.

The forms of authority in the first three columns of Figure 21 assume that an individual is operating within Weber's consensual, "legal-rational" model, whereby individuals act within a framework established by those institutional bodies responsible for institutional governance and decision-making. For instance, the information systems manager, who had delegated authority to make decisions with respect to the design and upgrading of the information system (page 230), would, nevertheless, be expected to take cognisance of the specifications agreed by the

relevant management and user groups for the system, and would be likely to be operating in Box 3 in relation to such decisions.

Figure 21: Continuum of Authority for Decision-Making



Beyond the management end of the continuum, "managerialist" approaches, as described in chapter two (pages 44-45), would be likely to involve decisions that are perceived to be outwith the established institutional framework of authority, for instance in relation to market considerations, and to confer undue power on individual managers (although the latter could be from an academic or a professional background). For instance, if the information systems manager or student services

manager (pages 172 and 180) were replaced by appointees who focused exclusively on the 'business management' aspects of these roles (as shown in the diagrams on pages 173 and 179), the latter might be seen as acting in ways that were "managerial". Thus, while Boxes 1-3 represent authority that "has a normative dimension, suggesting a kind of consent" (Isaacs, 2004: 54), activity that takes place in Box 4 may be perceived as a taking of power without authority, that is, as being outwith appropriate controls.

Legitimacies associated with the three categories of professional

The following section relates the sources of authority and legitimacy described above to the three categories of professional identified in the study.

Bounded professionals

Those categorised as *bounded professionals*, in both generalist and specialist roles, are likely to be responsible for the stewardship of regulatory requirements, be they academic regulations, human resource practices, or a departmental budget. Their authority is based on their knowledge of these requirements, about which they exercise judgement and give advice in relation to, for instance, necessary adjustments. In that sense, they could be said to be operating as administrators, whether or not they were formally designated as 'managers'. Thus, the finance manager at NewU described how:

"The pro-vice-chancellor (resources) wanted to proceed with a project, and I ... did a risk assessment ... and I came down very firmly on the side of not going ahead with it, because there were some risks ... that we couldn't

mitigate to a satisfactory level, and I told him very clearly what my advice is, and I wrote to him on several occasions, and I said to him my advice is, and my advice continues to be that we should not do this ...”

Although this person would have significant influence over decisions, therefore, in that “it’s not very often that I’ve given advice and it hasn’t been accepted”, he was not actually taking the decision.

Bounded professionals operating within clear regulatory frameworks or guidelines, therefore, might be said to draw their authority principally from their execution of the technical aspects of their roles, and the expertise that that requires. They do this in what Habermas terms a “non-social action situation” (Habermas, 1984: 285), putting the facts in a neutral way, as exemplified by the measured response of the finance manager at NewU, quoted above, pages 255-256. In Habermas’ typology of “instrumental”, “strategic” and “communicative” action, therefore, activity within formal frameworks and guidelines might be categorised as “instrumental” action, in that:

“We call an action oriented to success instrumental when we consider it under the aspect of following technical rules of action and assess the efficiency of an intervention into a complex of circumstances and events” (Habermas, 1984: 285).

In Handy’s terms, therefore, as described on pages 245-246, *bounded professionals* are likely, voluntarily or involuntarily, to be associated with maintaining the requirements associated with a role culture, drawing their authority primarily from

their locale in the organisation. They act in accordance with the expectations arising from the “rules and resources” associated with organisational structures and processes, and are valued by their institutions because they maintain order and control. *Bounded professionals* are, therefore, less likely to be involved in negotiating their own position, for instance in relation to functional boundaries, either because they do not wish to or, like the departmental administrators at MultiU, are unable to do so.

However, their boundedness can make it difficult for them to deal with ambiguous situations, whereby they might be subject to competing legitimacies. Thus, the personnel manager at CampusU, page 148, did not like the idea of a dual reporting line to the head of administration and a pro-vice chancellor; and the academic administrator at MultiU, page 147, was uncomfortable dealing with more than one sphere of activity at the same time. Similarly, a departmental administrator at MultiU, page 156, found it difficult to accommodate her relationship with both the central administration and her head of department in relation to the departmental plan.

Cross-boundary and unbounded professionals

In contrast to *bounded professionals*, *cross-boundary professionals* are more likely to become political actors in institutional decision-making. Both the information systems manager and the student services manager, for instance, were involved in constructing and negotiating a case based on the value of the activities of their respective sections, and in doing so adopted influencing strategies, in a “purposive-

rational manner”, with a “success-oriented attitude” (Habermas, 1984: 286). This takes them beyond a situation in which they are reactively implementing decisions made by others, to one in which they are explicit about promoting the institutional activities for which they are responsible, and persuading others of this. They may adopt a pragmatic, and even political, approach in order to achieve their objectives, reflecting Habermas’ “strategic action” orientation (Habermas, 1984: 285).

In actively using boundaries, and the spaces on either side of them, to build knowledge that will assist their cause, *cross-boundary professionals* are likely to draw on both the position power and expert power described by Handy (pages 245-246). For instance, the student recruitment manager at CampusU, page 166, saw himself as an administrator in his operation of the institutional admissions process, and as a manager in his understanding of the market in which CampusU was seeking to attract students. He therefore derives his authority from more than one source, including for instance, the institutional policy framework on admissions (Box 2 of Figure 21 on page 254), and his own knowledge of the activities of competitor institutions in relation to decisions about whether the institution should seek to enter a new overseas market (Box 3 of Figure 21 on page 254).

A comparison between the activities of the student services manager (page 180) and enterprise manager at NewU (page 194), both of whom were involved in developing the business environment there, illustrates the different action orientations of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*, whereby the former are more oriented to “strategic action” and the latter to “communicative action” (Habermas, 1984: 285).

Thus, the enterprise manager, an *unbounded professional*, recognising that disappointing Research Assessment Exercise outcomes and consequent restructuring had caused “a lot of bitterness... and fossilised a whole series of negative attitudes about what it’s possible and not possible to do”, was aware that technical mechanisms alone, such as rewards and incentives, were unlikely to encourage academic staff to undertake research with external partners. This manager, therefore, took it upon himself to develop a basis for dialogue so that researchers and external partners could explore projects that might be of mutual interest and advantage. Through his ability to take the part of the other, in sociological terms, he achieved “co-operative negotiation of common definitions of the situation” (Habermas, 1984: 137). His legitimacy, therefore, derived from his ability to create space for common understandings to develop in a three-way communication between himself, academic staff and external partners.

Not only was the enterprise manager acting as an intermediary in bringing together different partners, but he was also, by creating safe space in which to develop understandings about causes of disaffection within the university, offering what might be described as a therapeutic role. In doing so, he had pressed for a wider review of motivational factors in the university:

“That’s something I’ve argued when I dare, to various people within the university ... some rigorous cultural self-analysis needs to go on with a view to... trying to change things”.

Acknowledging the low morale that existed, he took it upon himself to try to interpret this, and to transmit this message to those who might not want to hear it, thus

bringing into view something that was hidden. Furthermore, although he was aware that he might be exceeding his authority by commenting on issues of staff morale, he was nevertheless prepared to take this risk as a professional, and managed it by choosing his opportunities to speak, and building his professional capital as and when he was able.

In Bernstein's terms, the "weakly classified" approach of *unbounded professionals* to institutional space and knowledge (Bernstein, 1970: 62) may assist them not only in developing lateral relationships, but also in developing relationships with colleagues at a different level of seniority (as occurred, for instance, between the human resources officer (page 192) and heads of department, who were significantly senior to her in the organisational structure):

"Relaxed frames ... change the nature of authority relationships by increasing the rights of [those lower down the hierarchy]" (Bernstein, 1970: 61).

The enterprise manager, likewise, had been able to build relationships with senior managers:

"I've got a responsibility to deal with the pro-vice-chancellors and directors of research ... and I've managed to create really productive relationships, in some cases friendships, [with them]" (enterprise manager).

He was, therefore, constructing his own legitimacy, not only with academic researchers and external partners, but also with senior academic managers within the university, so that he became a member of an "interest group" promoting regional partnership (Archer, 2000: 278).

By contrast with the enterprise manager, the information systems manager at NewU, a *cross-boundary professional*, page 172, struggled to achieve a dialogue with mainstream academic staff. He saw communication, rather, in terms of:

“an email will go out and the paper will be on the website and people can read it if they want ... and the invitation will be there – ring me if you’re interested [in being part of the consultation process about developments to the IT system]”.

In Habermas’ terminology, therefore, the information systems manager was, in this instance, acting “instrumentally”, with the specific goal of obtaining feedback on the student information system, rather than establishing a dialogue whereby “common conviction” might be achieved (Habermas, 1984: 287). Unlike the enterprise manager, he had not invested in developing new space in which “common situation definitions” could be developed as “an essential element of the interpretive accomplishments required for communicative action” (Habermas, 1984: 286).

Cross-boundary and *unbounded professionals*, therefore, adopt different, but complementary approaches to the increasingly fluid conditions in which institutions operate. On the one hand, *cross-boundary professionals* tend to seize advantage from their understanding of different functional spaces and rapidly changing conditions, and to assist their institutions to maximise investment in current opportunities. On the other hand, *unbounded professionals*, less oriented towards immediate goals, use the same fluid conditions to open up possibilities and potentials, making links between the perspectives of different groups, and thereby enabling their institutions to invest in new forms of space for the future. Whereas *cross-boundary professionals*

contribute to the quality of ongoing decisions with respect to immediate outcomes, *unbounded professionals*, rather, contribute to the quality of longer-term outcomes for the future. In the case of the student support manager (page 190), the human resources officer (page 192) and the enterprise manager (page 194), all *unbounded professionals*, this involved the creation of safe space in which students, heads of department, and researchers, respectively, could grow into new activities and experiences. In doing this, *unbounded professionals* might be said to be operating more like academic colleagues, facilitating new perspectives and understandings to create new forms of institutional knowledge.

Unbounded professionals, therefore, are exploratory and creative in their approach to situations that are unlikely to be orderly or predictable, and may involve continuous improvisation rather than once-and-for-all solutions. The legitimacies associated with this type of activity would appear to derive from a willingness to acknowledge “the legitimacy of messiness” (de Rond, 2003; O’Neil, 2007), working through rather than disguising what might be perceived as negative effects, and seeing them as part of a flux of unfinished, and possibly un-finishable, business. The legitimacy of *unbounded professionals*, therefore, is constructed via their investment in their projects and communicative relationships, which in turn contribute to the development of their institutions. Thus, in the words of the enterprise manager:

“I enjoy the freedom of it, that ... you’re kind of trusted to get on and deliver ... use the time in the way you see fit to contribute to the corporate objectives”.

Furthermore, the emergence of *unbounded professionals* would appear to illustrate Bauman's claim that professional legitimacy increasingly depends on the ability of the individual to undertake exploratory and communicative activity:

“In the present day ‘liquid’ stage of modernity, demand is fast drying up for the orthodox ‘disciplining and surveilling’ managerial functions ... [s/he] who wants to succeed ... needs to demonstrate conviviality and communicative skills, openness and curiosity”. (Bauman: 2005: 46)

This suggests that the forms of professional knowledge offered by *bounded professionals* are likely to have more limited currency than hitherto, that “expertise as such can no longer claim authority”, and that contemporary staff “[have] to grasp unpredictable intersections of knowledge that fold in on one another” (Strathern, 2008: 12).

Nevertheless, as noted in chapter nine, the open-ended approach of *unbounded professionals* may also engender risk if they are insufficiently “instrumental” (Habermas, 2002: 285) in ensuring that systems do not break down, as had occurred in the case of the student support manager, pages 196-197. A further risk could be that of allowing their enthusiasm for a particular project to take them in directions that were insufficiently oriented towards required institutional objectives (in Habermas’ terms, “oriented to success” (Habermas, 2002: 285)).

In summary, in relation to the continuum of authority for decision-making on page 254, it is suggested that, although it would be possible for *bounded professionals* to be perceived as being “managerial”, for instance, by adhering rigidly to technical or

regulatory requirements in ways that were inappropriate to academic contexts, *cross-boundary professionals* would be the most likely of the three categories of professional to stray outwith an institutional policy framework, in seeking to achieve successful outcomes through “strategic action” (Habermas, 1984: 285). This could occur if, for instance, they became overly zealous in pursuit of their objectives to the exclusion of other considerations (even though such objectives might, in their view, be for the benefit of the institution). It is further suggested that, *unbounded professionals*, because of their orientation towards “communicative action” (Habermas, 1984: 286), through which they seek to establish, and work within, a commonly agreed framework of understanding, would be less likely to operate at the “managerial” end of the continuum in Figure 21.

Relating legitimacies to the case institutions

Figure 22 on page 265 summarises the legitimacies associated with the three forms of professional in terms of Handy’s typology of institutional cultures:

Figure 22: Handy's Organisational Cultures and Forms of Power in Relation to**(a) the Case Institutions and (b) the Three Categories of Professional**

Case institutions/ Handy's Prof Types Cultures	(a)			(b)		
	CampusU	MultiU	NewU	Bounded professionals	Cross- boundary professionals	Unbounded professionals
"Power culture"/resource power		*		*		
"Role culture"/position power		*	*	*	*	
"Task culture"/expert power	*				*	*
"Person culture"/personal power			*			*

Note: The asterisks refer to the predominant relationship between Handy's cultures and (a) the three case institutions and (b) the three categories of professional

At MultiU, the authority of professional staff appeared to derive from a role culture, with elements of a power culture around senior officers in the central administration. At NewU, authority appeared to be balanced between *bounded professionals* operating in a role culture, and *cross-boundary professionals* operating in a person culture; and at CampusU the activities of professional staff, and their academic colleagues, appeared to intersect via a task culture. However, it is acknowledged that, in view of the small numbers of respondents involved, this analysis can offer only an indicator of the sources of power in the case institutions.

The study would appear, therefore, to reflect Handy's typology of organisational cultures and power sources, in that *bounded professionals* were concentrated at MultiU and NewU (77% and 43% of staff respectively), where "role" cultures were present. The highest proportion of both *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*

was at CampusU (44% and 33% respectively), where a “task” culture was evident, and in which individuals interacted at the intersections of the matrix. At NewU, which had a comparable number of *cross-boundary professionals* (43%) to CampusU, but only one *unbounded professional* (14%), there was a less well-developed “task” culture, in that the *cross-boundary professionals* appeared to interact less with academic colleagues than at CampusU. These individuals might, therefore, be said to be operating in a “person” culture, which was superimposed on a role culture.

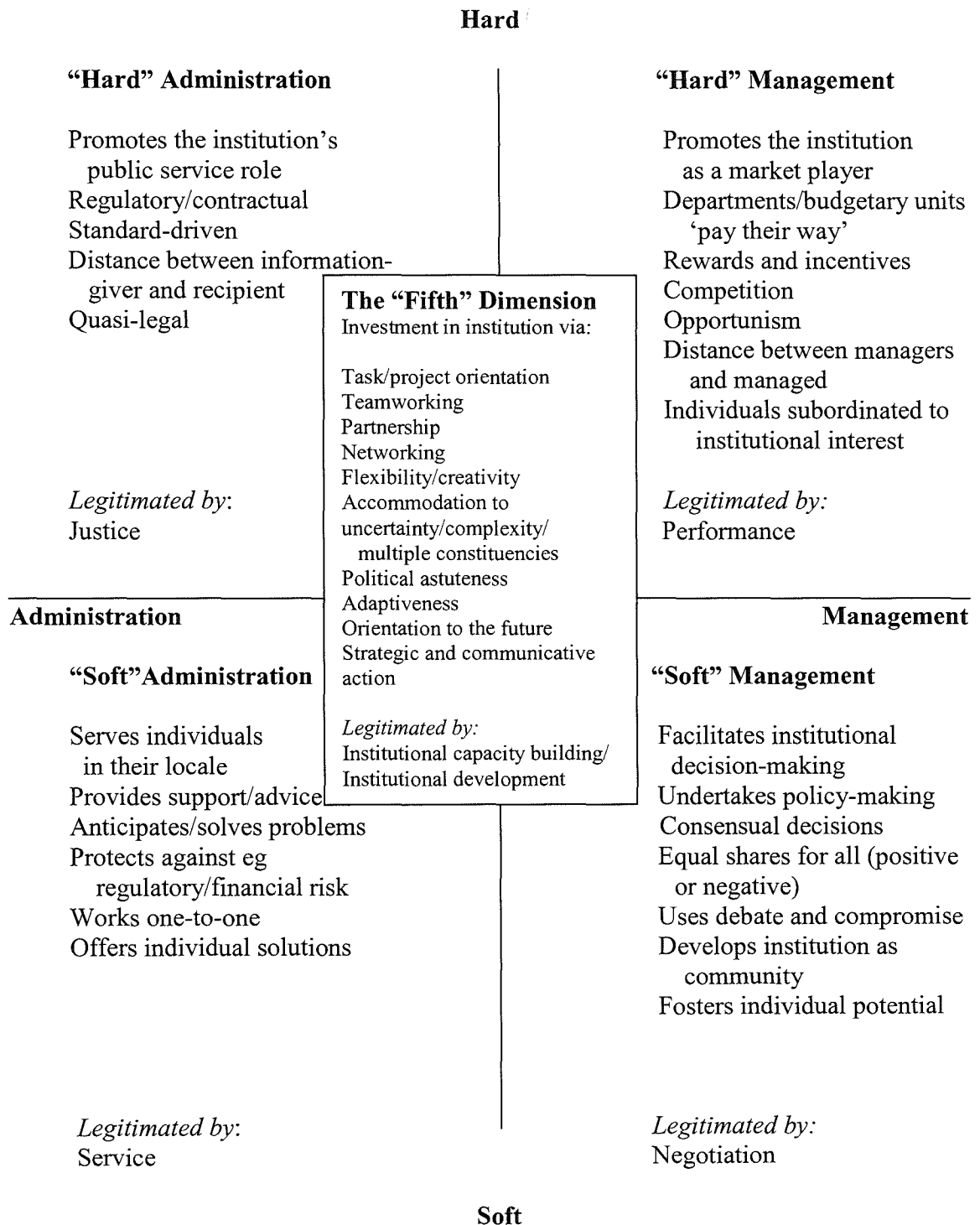
The study did not seek direct evidence about the balance of power and authority between professional and academic domains, for instance via evidence gathered from academic managers or mainstream academic staff. However, the accounts of the twenty-four professional staff who were interviewed, combined with the institutional profiles, would suggest that, at the time of the study, the greatest tension existed between academic and professional domains at MultiU and NewU, with academic authority predominating at MultiU, and a business ethos increasingly dominant at NewU. At CampusU, authority appeared to be more evenly negotiated between professional and academic domains, with acknowledgement that this was “a delicate social balance”. The study would also appear to suggest that although tension between academic and professional domains is likely to be a part of institutional life, its effective handling is likely to depend on ongoing attention to the development of a basis for “communicative action”.

A “fifth” dimension of administration and management

Issues of legitimacy in higher education have tended to focus, for instance in the neo-liberal literature described in chapter two, on “managerial” activities seen as outwith a policy framework that has the assent of the academic community. Less attention has been paid to the impact of activity geared towards institutional capacity building and development, and new forms of legitimacy associated with these. This may, however, have been hampered by the lack of an appropriate vocabulary whereby, for instance, the head of administration at NewU described herself as being “somewhere in the middle between management and administration”, although she could not “quite put into words what that ‘something other’ is”. Ways in which such a vocabulary might be constructed, via the addition of a “fifth” dimension to the four quadrants of “hard” and “soft” administration and management shown in Figure 1, page 31, are described in Figure 23, page 268.

The “fifth” dimension summarises legitimacies deriving from the contributions of *cross-boundary professionals* to institutional capacity building and of *unbounded professionals* to institutional development, as outlined on pages 255-264. It echoes Senge’s concept of a “fifth discipline” in which he suggests that the “dynamic complexity” facing contemporary organisations calls for an understanding of non-linear relationships between cause and effect, which may not be close in time or space, and cannot be addressed by “familiar solutions to problems” (Senge, 2006: 61). Therefore, “to understand the most challenging managerial issues requires seeing the whole system that generates the issues ... regardless of parochial organisational boundaries” (Senge, 2006: 66).

Figure 23: A “Fifth” Dimension of Administration and Management



In their active approach to creating communicative space, *unbounded professionals*, in particular, reflect Senge's "mind shift" from "seeing problems as caused by something or someone 'out there'" to creating one's own "reality" in a "learning organisation" (Senge, 2006: 12). Thus, in relation to this study, institutional structures and boundaries might be said to influence activity only insofar as they are subject to interpretation by members of the institution.

There are also indications from respondents in the study that professional legitimacy is seen increasingly to derive from a link with functional or project areas, about which individuals feel that they can speak with some authority. This corresponds with a view of professionalism, particularly among younger staff, as being acquired by the construction of an activity portfolio, rather than by membership of a grouping of professionals with a similar profile, either in their institutions or nationally. This is illustrated by a comment made by the student recruitment manager (page 166) that newly recruited staff want titles that will reinforce their association with a task area, rather than with a generic cadre:

"... the title of your role can have a big part in defining how much people are prepared to give attention to what you've got to say around the institution....

Very few people want to be known as administrative assistant, so if you give them the title of ... student recruitment assistant, or publications assistant, they often feel a lot happier and a lot more confident about talking about their professional competence" (student recruitment manager).

This suggests that contemporary staff are less likely than their predecessors to regard themselves as members of a professional cadre associated with higher education. The value of association with a peer group, therefore, is likely to be seen more in terms of opportunities for networking, raising one's profile, and providing professional development opportunities. In contemporary institutions, therefore, the term 'professional' may increasingly imply experience that is validated by a portfolio of successfully completed projects, as well as qualification(s), specialist or generalist, that give external credibility. It may also imply the possession of a network of "weak ties", which "are critical to ... creative environment[s] because they allow for rapid entry of new people and rapid absorption of new ideas" (Florida, 2002: 276-277).

Recognition and misrecognition

However, the emergence of a "fifth" dimension can create additional legitimacy issues for professional staff, beyond those associated with administration and management. For instance, there may be a lack of acknowledgement of the more active approaches of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* to their roles and, as a result, they may have difficulty in gaining credit for their contributions. Furthermore, the pragmatic nature of new forms of institutional knowledge, such as understandings about an institution's attractiveness to different student markets, may run counter to the propositional knowledge which is familiar to interest groups in the university (Eraut, 1994: 103).

The study suggests that, in order to develop their legitimacy in the "fifth" dimension, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* are obliged to manage a continued

dissonance between contemporary identities and the status accorded to them. As a result, they negotiate the validity of their knowledges and relationships by editing their identities and modifying the messages that they give. These staff, therefore, use their awareness of possible challenges to their legitimacy to manage their own positioning, for instance by identifying themselves as administrators rather than managers, if this helps to maximise the opportunity for their projects to be accomplished.

Thus, a dislocation of understandings about the nature of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded* activities, in particular, and of the professional identities of the individuals associated with them, may bring about “a disturbance of the structure and distribution of power in ... relationships and in existing ... identities” (Bernstein, 1970: 63). In turn, this may create “liminal” conditions associated with changes of practice:

“... new conceptual thresholds, unfamiliar discourse and knowledge practices, and shifts in existing power relations” (Land, 2008: 140).

A revision of legitimacies, therefore, may require a “resocialisation” of interest groups (Bernstein, 1970: 65), and involve a time delay before less *bounded* forms of working are validated.

These legitimacy problems may be theorised by considering the relationship between administration, management and academic activity as “fields of practice”, that is:

“a configuration of relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon the occupants, agents or institutions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 72-73).

Each “field” has its own rules or principles that structure the behaviour of individuals, so that they acquire a disposition or “habitus” associated with that field. Behaviour arising from this disposition is a result of both the agency adopted by the individual, and the positions that are available to them within the field. The value of activity within a field (or its “capital”) depends on the degree of recognition accorded to it by dominant actors (Grenfell and James, 1998).

The traditional primacy of the academic field in institutions of higher education means that, in Bourdieu’s terminology, the field of professional staff has been “embedded” within this, as administration, rather than being accorded its own status, either as management, or as more project-oriented or developmental activity. Thus, in traditional service relationships, administrators accept the dominance of the academic field. In Bourdieu’s terms, therefore, actors in the field are obliged to accept the discourse of administration that is created via the academic field as given or “natural”, and this becomes their “habitus”.

Thus, staff who use ‘administration’ as a disguise for ‘management’ do this in order to maintain legitimacy while establishing a new field of practice, such as project work or institutional development. They therefore use administration as a “euphemism”, whereby they “earn credit, show loyalty, [and] maintain confidence” (Hanks, 2005: 78). In doing this they may collude with academic colleagues, while at the same time

developing their professional practice as an independent rather than as an “embedded” field, with its own legitimacies. Administration, therefore, becomes the “ruling principle ... accepted as one thing, while the operations of the field [in this study, management or project work] are another” (Grenfell and James, 1998: 23).

As new fields of practice emerge, with differing degrees of dependence on the established academic field, the problem for *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* in particular is that, in sociological terms, they have “inconsistent status” (Lanski, 1954). This is because their roles, in terms of the knowledges they offer and the relationships they form, have changed significantly, but they continue to be legitimated via concepts of ‘administration’, albeit this may be used as a lever for achieving outcomes in an academic environment.

Conclusion

In contemporary institutions, the continuum of authority associated with administration and management, shown in Figure 21 on page 254, is being extended by legitimacies associated with a “fifth” dimension, as described in Figure 23 on page 268. In Handy’s terms, it would appear that significant numbers of professional staff are creating a task culture and, on occasion, a person culture of their own, through which they build credibility on the basis of their contribution to institutional capacity-building to deal with ongoing demands, and of their contribution to institutional development for the future.

Rather than relying solely on institutional structures, such as job descriptions, as vehicles for identity, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* are, rather, creating new forms of legitimacy by responding to uncertain environments through “strategic action” (Habermas, 2002: 285), in the case of *cross-boundary professionals*, and “communicative action” (Habermas, 2002: 285) in the case of *unbounded professionals*. However, because understandings of new forms of activity, and the staff associated with them, are not necessarily articulated or recognised, there is a sense in which their legitimacy becomes an ongoing process of negotiation. The following chapter reviews the implications of these developments for the future, both for institutions and for individuals.

12: CONCLUSION: COMPLEX FUTURES

Introduction

This study has suggested that the frames of ‘administration’, ‘management’ and ‘professionalism’ fall short in offering a comprehensive picture of movements in the identities of contemporary professional staff, particularly in relation to staff who are more oriented towards the development of their institution for the future than towards the maintenance of current activity. It suggests that a fuller perspective may be provided by categorising individuals according to the agency and mobility they display, particularly in relation to institutional boundaries.

This concluding chapter considers some implications of the movements in professional identity that have been described in the thesis, and goes on to reflect both backwards and forwards on the study’s findings, on what it has been possible to achieve, and where gaps might exist because of methodological or other constraints. The distribution of, and relation between, *bounded professionals*, *cross-boundary professionals* and *unbounded professionals* is discussed and linked back to the three case institutions. Finally, suggestions are made as to ways in which the work might be extended and developed in future, to provide a fuller picture of the contemporary workforce.

Reflections on the journey

The research questions arose from a sense that the identities of contemporary professional staff were not sufficiently captured by understandings of the terms

‘administration’ and ‘management’, by the shift perceived by commentators from the former to the latter, or by the process of professionalisation that has occurred via, for instance, the provision of dedicated qualifications for them. In the course of addressing the research questions, further features emerged, namely that:

- In practice, the professional workforce is diversifying as people move across functional and organisational boundaries, and become involved in more project-oriented ways of working.
- There is collusion between professional and academic staff in perpetuating the term ‘administration’ to downplay the concept of ‘management’ in the university.
- While for some staff, categorised as *bounded professionals*, identity remains fixed within a pre-determined role or job description, for others it becomes a project that can be constructed both over time and across spatial boundaries.

This thesis represents a snapshot of professional identities in 2003/2004. In order to try to develop a fuller profile of such staff, the study adopted an in-depth, qualitative approach, using a sample of three institutions, and focused particularly on fourteen individuals within them. Since the interviews were conducted, some individuals have either retired or moved on, and the institutions themselves are likely to have changed and developed. Such conclusions as are drawn, therefore, should be regarded as indicators of trends that deserve further investigation via a more comprehensive, longitudinal study.

Despite the fact that the same request was sent to each institution for eight respondents in a range of generalist and specialist roles, at middle and senior management levels, there were variations in the number and profiles of interviewees made available to the researcher. At CampusU, nine individuals were offered, and all were included in the study. At NewU, one of the eight respondents offered was a librarian, and although she was interviewed, the interview was discounted in the analysis in order to maintain consistency of the overall profile of respondents, who otherwise came from a professional administrative or management background, including finance and human resources. There would, however, be a case for including managers of specialist services such as library and information technology in any follow-up study.

The fact that a number of interviewees were no longer in post, and that further interviews were conducted for another project in 2006 with staff appointed to mixed roles at CampusU and NewU, meant that it did not prove feasible to review the findings, for instance through a meeting with interviewees as a group in each institution. In any case, the head of administration at MultiU was not willing for a second round of interviews to be conducted in 2006, citing pressure of work among staff. It would, therefore, be of interest to repeat the exercise at similar types of institution after say, five years, to see whether the movements in professional identity that have been noted have gained momentum. If the exercise were repeated, for instance, it would be interesting to know whether the same proportion of respondents (50%) would be categorised as *bounded professionals*, and whether *unbounded*

professionals represent a phenomenon that is increasing, and if so, at what rate and under what conditions.

As noted in chapter five on methodology, the decision was taken not to interview the academic colleagues of respondents, but to focus on professional managers' own understandings of themselves, partly to make the study manageable, but also because there was no published work in which such questions had been asked of practitioners. Other studies are beginning to emerge of changing relationships between academic and professional managers, for instance, in faculty settings McMaster (2005), and in relation to research management (Poon, 2005; Shelley, 2006). However, it would be a natural extension to the study to interview a team or network of individuals involved in projects such as student support or enterprise partnership, to see how they interact.

As pointed out in the thesis (page 142), the model on page 140 was constructed for illustrative purposes, and individuals were categorised according to the dominant characteristics that they displayed. However, a number of respondents also displayed characteristics of another category. For instance, the information systems manager (page 172) had strong external links to the commercial supplier with whom he worked on research and development issues, importing the knowledge he gained to contribute creatively to the development of the information system at NewU, and demonstrated *unbounded* characteristics in that respect. The student recruitment officer (page 166), likewise, in maintaining the process-oriented aspects of the admissions system, and the interface with the Universities and Colleges Admissions System (UCAS), displayed *bounded* characteristics in ensuring a timely and

consistent service. Conversely, the departmental administrators (pages 154 and 156), categorised as *bounded professionals*, demonstrated the desire and potential to undertake *cross-boundary* activity, although their attempts were frustrated, and the enterprise manager (page 194), an *unbounded professional*, worked back and forth across the external boundary of the institution in his dealing with regional partners and academic staff, and might be said to be *cross-boundary* in that respect. As noted in chapter ten, the facility to move between categories is also likely to depend on institutional structures, so that professional identities are likely to be influenced by a combination of what the individual is able to achieve, and has the will to achieve, in local circumstances.

Moreover, the study showed that identity movements were not uniform across the three case institutions. At MultiU, seven of the eight respondents offered and interviewed were categorised as *bounded professionals*. This may be a matter of chance, reflecting the identities of the individuals who happened to be offered for interview, or it may reflect the actual position in that there were indeed fewer *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* across the institution. It may also reflect MultiU's mission as a Russell Group institution, in that senior managers there may have perceived it as being under less immediate pressure from its environment than did senior managers at the other two institutions. Because of the strength of its teaching and research profile, MultiU's senior management team could, perhaps, afford to take the view that it was in a commanding position, and did not need the type of professional who would move beyond pre-determined boundaries.

However, the internal tensions expressed by respondents at MultiU, and acknowledged by the senior management team, suggest that, despite its strong market position, a more flexible approach to boundaries, and the fostering of interaction across them, would enhance both professional and organisational development. It might assist lateral communication, for instance, between departmental administrators, and provide a way of addressing some of the frustrations that had become apparent, often at boundaries, in the administrative review that had taken place (described on page 127).

By contrast, CampusU and NewU were, as institutions, obliged to engage with their environments more actively, and to make choices about their futures. Senior managers at these two institutions may, therefore, have appointed individuals likely to be characterised in the study as *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*. It is perhaps significant that CampusU, which was undergoing change by adopting stronger regional and community partnerships, had the highest proportion of *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals*. The study suggests, therefore, that those institutions that are obliged to respond to changes in their environments, for whatever reason, are more likely to host the new forms of professional described, who work across and beyond boundaries.

Outcomes and implications of the study

It would appear from the study that, collectively, the identities of professional staff have shifted over time from something that comprises essential elements (an “essence”) to something built cumulatively by individuals (a “project”) (Henkel,

2000: 13-14). Thus, while *bounded professionals* might be said to be “social subjects of particular discourses” (Hall, 1996: 6), with identities that are “‘taken on’ through shared practices” (Taylor, 2008: 29), *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* demonstrate, as Delanty (2008) suggests, that identity construction is not simply a linear project over time, but is one that is also contingent on an individual’s positioning in relation to others.

Furthermore, it seems likely that professional identities will continue to develop and diversify, through the emergence of staff who, for instance:

- Have academic credentials such as master’s and doctoral level qualifications.
- Have a teaching/research background in adult, further or higher education.
- Work in project teams dealing with, for instance, either one-off projects such as bids for funding, or more extended projects such as widening participation.
- Undertake tasks that in the past would have been undertaken solely by academic staff, such as offering pastoral advice to students, speaking at outreach events in schools, or undertaking overseas recruitment visits and interviews.
- Undertake quasi-academic functions such as giving induction talks to students, embedding action on disability or diversity into the curriculum, or undertaking research into the impact of access programmes.
- Provide an expert, interpretive function between academic staff and external partners in relation to, for instance, the marketing of tailor-made

programmes, or the development of research spin-out and business partnership.

- Undertake research into institutional practice so as to build an evidence base in relation to, for instance, recruitment and progression patterns.
- Undertake research into professional practice, for instance, via professional associations, journals and conferences (Borden, 2008).

Some of these people might see themselves as moving into academic management roles, for instance, to a pro-vice-chancellor post with a portfolio such as administration, strategic planning, or staffing. Two of the *cross-boundary professionals* in the study, the planning manager at CampusU (page 175) and the student services manager at NewU (page 180), for instance, had such ambitions, although they were currently undertaking roles that would generally be regarded as ‘professional’ rather than ‘academic’.

The filling of professional posts by individuals with academic credentials, whether or not they have held an academic post in a university, was corroborated by the enterprise manager at NewU, who was “increasingly [recruiting] people with doctorates”, and suggested that:

“... somebody who’s got a PhD in a relevant academic subject like biotechnology, who may have sat on the board of a spin-out company at some point... they look sexy in that way, because they’ve got an academic background ... but they also have some experience of harsh and brutal business realities”.

This trend is also supported by Poon's (2005) findings of an increasing tendency for people recruited into research administration to have doctorates and/or a research background, reflecting "the increased complexity of research administration" (Poon, 2005: 6), whereby staff need to understand the research process as it relates to both staff and students, as well as a rapidly changing funding and training environment.

The respondents were asked to place themselves in ten-year age bands, from which it emerged that those categorised as *bounded professionals* were all in their forties and fifties, *cross-boundary professionals* in their thirties, forties and fifties, and *unbounded professionals* in their twenties, thirties and forties. Furthermore, the fact that eight of the twelve *bounded professionals* in the study were in their fifties suggests that there may be a generational effect. Although these statistics would indicate that more flexible working practices are associated with younger staff, as might be expected, a longitudinal study would be required to discover whether, for instance, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* are likely to become more *bounded* if they remain for an extended period in a particular field or project, and whether they might, in turn, create their own boundaries. For instance, it is possible that, over time, and as their careers develop, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* would mark out and protect their own, albeit extended, fields of activity, and seek to embed these organisationally. Thus, an individual might begin and end their career as a *bounded professional*, having adopted *cross-boundary* or *unbounded* approaches for a period of career development in between.

Further research might identify long-term trends in relation to the categories of staff defined in the thesis, and any patterns in their relationship to different types of institution. Informally, I was aware that by 2007 five of the twelve *bounded professionals* had retired; two of the *cross-boundary professionals* had made career moves for promotion within the sector; one of the *unbounded professionals* had entered the private sector, and one had moved to an academic post. While it does appear from the study to be possible to begin a career as a *bounded professional* and to become either a *cross-boundary* or *unbounded professional*, it would be interesting to explore further what conditions might facilitate or frustrate such a move, and therefore how senior managers might assist this to occur, and under what circumstances a reverse process might occur.

It would also be of interest to see whether working across and beyond boundaries becomes increasingly valued as enhancing an individual's career prospects. If this were the case, it could generate a wider gap between *bounded professionals* on the one hand, and *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* on the other, so that the former might be said increasingly to represent Friedson's "standard" group of professionals (Friedson, 2001: 212), undertaking tasks that, although requiring specialised expertise, are geared to "standardised production", with *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* representing "elite" groups, who apply their expertise to more complex, individuated tasks (Friedson, 2001: 111).

Such a cleavage could, in turn, lead to it being more difficult to move incrementally from being a *bounded professional* to becoming a *cross-boundary* or *unbounded*

professional, and further contribute to the fragmentation of professional staff as a collective. Institutions, and individuals, therefore may wish to consider:

- How those characterised as *bounded professionals*, for whatever reason, might obtain experience of less prescribed ways of working.
- How the three categories of staff might be used, in their own ways, to support institutional objectives.
- Ways in which the three categories of staff might be encouraged to interact with each other.

As identity possibilities expand, it may be, also, that the most mature institutions will be those that are able to incorporate, and facilitate, a balance of the three forms of professional that is appropriate for their shape, mission, and direction of travel, taking a view of where and how these might be clustered. Although, at some institutions, heads of administration take a close interest in the development of their staff, this is not something that is generally addressed in a holistic way by senior management teams, who may find it helpful to review this balance.

On the one hand, *bounded* approaches are likely to continue to be required to maintain processes and systems, to safeguard academic and regulatory standards, and to ensure organisational continuity. As one vice-chancellor put it:

“...you can’t just say we live in a sort of totally diffuse, intangible post-modern world; because ... we are actually an organisation, we do have to have some structures” (Vice-chancellor, post-1992 institution).

On the other hand, it may be helpful to balance *bounded* approaches with more flexible working practices, in order that the former do not become overly restrictive.

As suggested by the enterprise manager at NewU:

“... ideally you want a leavening of the old hands, and new staff coming in with fresh ideas and so forth; but you need that kind of leavening of institutional wisdom that, you know, carries on and helps oil the wheels in its own way”.

Institutional discussion about the shape of the professional workforce might include, therefore, whether more project-oriented individuals might be helpful in stimulating new thinking and ways of working, bearing in mind that too many such people could lead to too little organisational form, or the non-achievement of desired outcomes. Furthermore, when such people *are* recruited, if they are then overly restricted by boundary structures, this may lead to frustration on their part. Individuals, also, may wish to consider their own identities in terms of the typology that has been developed, whether or how they might wish to modulate their identity, draw on different approaches according to circumstances, or move in a different direction.

There are implications, also, for institutions of increased movement by professional staff both between institutions (more likely to be the case for *cross-boundary professionals*) and in and out of the sector (more likely to be the case for *unbounded professionals*). One view of increasingly mobile individuals is of a:

“national (and international) cadre of mobile and unattached senior managers without loyalty but with their own (not an institutional) portfolio – the new portfolio successional career managers...” (Duke, 2002: 146).

Issues arise from this about the value accorded to professional staff who may bring valued expertise from elsewhere, but move on when they have completed their project. Thus, there may need to be a modification of the belief that such mobility represents ‘disloyalty’. It may be that such individuals make as valuable a contribution to an institution in the period they are there as longer serving staff who have “low external allegiance ... [and] high commitment to the employing institution” (Lockwood, 1996: 45, quoted in Kogan, 2007: 168). It could also be that, in contemporary environments, “loyalty” implies overly *bounded* approaches, with “strong ties” (Granovetter, 1973, 1974, quoted in Florida, 2002: 276). “Strong ties” are less adaptable to turbulence and change, and “consume much more ... time and energy” (Florida, 2002: 276), whereas “Weak ties allow us to mobilise more resources and more possibilities” (Florida, 2002: 277).

Consequences for individuals of the identity movements that have been demonstrated include the fact that it is increasingly difficult to define, or for an individual to acquire, a single body of knowledge associated with a professional role. Even when they have similar titles, roles are no longer homogeneous, and it is not easy to achieve a common understanding about them. For instance, heads of administration include people undertaking traditional registrar and/or secretary roles (Hogan, 2006), with or without responsibility for resources; pro-vice-chancellors with a portfolio for

administration and/or resources; individuals acting solely as clerks to governing bodies; and heads of corporate planning or corporate affairs.

One issue that arises at the interface between professional and academic domains is the relationship between, for instance, pro-vice-chancellors with a functional brief such as resources or staffing, and the director of that functional area. Another issue is the fact that, as spheres of activity in contemporary institutions become more complex, it is less feasible for one person (either a vice-chancellor or a head of administration) to be closely involved with every aspect of institutional management. The development of senior management teams reflects this (Kennie and Woodfield, 2006; 2007) and allows, for instance, for a vice-chancellor to concentrate on representing the institution externally, and senior professional staff to focus on internal matters.

In day-to-day terms, new forms of professional are emerging *de facto* and being incorporated into institutional working practices, whether or not they are formally acknowledged, reflecting the fact that:

“... even as difference is pathologised and refused legitimacy, new terms and identities are produced on the margins” (Rutherford, 1990: 22).

Recognition of these changes, and their implications for professional and career development, would not only assist individuals in achieving their potential, but also institutions in attracting and retaining appropriate staff for their needs. Thus, Middlehurst and Kennie call for university leaders to “redirect and reframe professional activities and behaviours and to reassess professional values”

(Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997: 66). Furthermore, as Florida suggests, new forms of “creative professional” are likely to wish to work in “stimulating, creative environments – [in] places that not only offer opportunities ... but openness to diversity, where they feel they can express themselves and validate their identities” (Florida, 2002: 11). Although Florida’s study refers to geographical locations, the same is likely to be true of institutions.

Reflections on the interface between professional and academic domains

The study illustrates that the distinction between academic activity, and ‘an Administration’ that serves this activity, has become less clear-cut, and is being replaced by a:

“partnership between those who have come up via a professional route and those through a purely academic career, [with] crossovers of personnel at various levels” Shattock (2000: 34).

Thus, it would appear that that a simple dichotomy, or “diarchy” (McMaster, 2005), between professional and academic activity no longer holds, and that:

“A more accurate account might emphasise the growing interpenetration of academic and managerial practice within higher education. In areas such as continuing education, technology transfer and special access programmes ... there is no easy separation between their intellectual and administrative aspects... academic values and managerial practice have been combined in unusual and volatile combinations” (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow, 1994: 84).

Although beyond the immediate scope of the study, a possible blurring of activity at the boundary between professional and academic domains is illustrated by an individual such as the planning manager at CampusU (page 175). This person might be said to be developing a ‘blended’ identity in the way that she worked with academic colleagues in departments and also the senior management team. In another institution she might have had a direct reporting line to a pro-vice-chancellor (planning), rather than being located in the academic administration. Where such joint working occurs, it becomes more difficult to pinpoint whether an idea emerged from an academic or professional manager, for instance in a discussion about an academic development and how it relates to institutional strategy and market position.

The study also suggests that positionings may be more complex than Clark’s (1998) distinctions suggest, in that professional staff are not only operating at and between the “centre” (in the central “Administration”) and the “periphery” (for instance, in academic departments), but are also creating new locales, particularly in relation to extended projects. If professional identities continue to diversify, it may be that Clark’s descriptions of the “strengthened steering core” and the “stimulated academic heartland” (Clark, 1998), will begin to be re-conceptualised. If so, this may help to overcome his “systemic problem” Clark (1995) of reconciling professional and academic agendas.

More recently, Clark himself has suggested the need for institutions to create a “perpetual momentum”, as they “adapt themselves and ... adapt to a changing society” (Clark, 2004). The study also suggests that, in Clark’s vision of an institution

that “sustains change” (Clark, 2004) in more fluid organisational environments, the shape of the professional workforce may be an increasingly significant factor in institutional development. Further work on the interface between professional and academic domains may assist, therefore, in providing some practical answers to questions posed, but not answered, by Clark:

“What critical features of university organisation compose these capacities [for adaptation]? How are these elements developed? How are they sustained and made into a platform for further change?” (Clark, 2004: 115).

Nevertheless, despite indications of overlap between professional and academic staff at the perimeters of academic activity, tension between the “management of academic activities” and the “management of institutional activities” (Middlehurst and Kennie, 1997: 61) may be inevitable, not least because of reductionist tendencies in administration and management in seeking orderly solutions to problems, and academic approaches that seek, rather, to problematise activity and explore all possibilities. Even where there is potential for joint working, some commentators continue to see this as involving a division of labour between academic and professional domains, with a loss of control on the part of academic staff, rather than as a mutual and collaborative endeavour:

“a ‘marriage’ between professionalism and managerialism [would involve] academics losing some control over the goals and social purposes of their work but retaining considerable autonomy over their practical and technical tasks” (Kogan and Teichler, 2007: 11).

Others point to opportunities for harmonisation between the two domains, suggesting that the opportunities created by joint working outweigh the challenges:

“Reflexivity, by problematising both traditional academic culture and managerialist ideology, may offer a strategy whereby these competing ethics can be combined” (Scott: 1995, 70).

And:

“There is clear potential for creating collaborations and partnerships across the boundaries between the heartland and the periphery to meet the needs of new or existing clients and markets and indeed, to create similar lateral relationships and cross-organisational roles between the university and other organisations” (Middlehurst, 2004: 275).

More recently, Taylor suggests that the development of a “creative commons”, involving “networking, laterality, hybridity, flexibility, multi-tasking and media capability” would assist universities to “identify continuities between the beliefs and allegiances of the ... ‘golden era’ and the current era of ‘super-complexity’” (Taylor, 2008: 38). The study indicates that growing numbers of professional staff would be well placed to contribute to such a “re-interpretation of collegiality” (Taylor, 2008: 38). Marginson and Considine (2000: 250), in an Australian context, make a similar plea for a “post-collegial, post-managerial form of university community” in which professional staff have equivalent membership, because they “are just as capable of sharing commitment to the institution and its work as are academic staff” (Marginson and Considine, 2000: 251).

Any such developments are likely to affect the positioning and status of professional staff. Pratt, with particular reference to post-1992 universities, suggests that there is a need for "...reconsideration of the nature of the academic (and non-academic) professions" (Pratt, 1997: 320). In a US context, Rhoades calls for "non-faculty" to become more integrated in the decision-making process:

"Faculty are not the only professionals on campus; the number of non-faculty managerial professionals is growing rapidly. Increasingly, they participate in institutions' basic academic work, and like faculty, they have important expertise about the academy to contribute in shared governance. In short, we need a more inclusive, democratic academic republic" (Rhoades 2005: 5).

The movements in identity noted in the study may, therefore, be part of a wider change in institutional patterns of activity, on which further work is required. These commentators would appear to suggest that there is potential for the establishment of superordinate space across professional and academic domains, and for the university to move in the direction of becoming a "community of professionals, not just a community of scholars" (AUT, 2001). Nevertheless, awareness and management of positive and negative perceptions of such a development is likely to be a significant factor in the effective use of any space thereby created. Further studies would assist, therefore, in relating changing professional identities to these wider contexts, in particular those noted by international commentators.

Future directions

The study would appear to corroborate evidence of a convergence of professional and management activity in other sectors. For instance, Fitzgerald and Ferlie (2000: 278) note a growth in roles that carry both professional and management responsibilities in the NHS and the civil service. Middlehurst and Kennie (1995: 122), suggest that "... parallel career development routes, which give equivalent recognition to both managerial and professional skills, are of growing importance... ", and that these might include "professional specialists", "professional generalists" and "managerial specialists".

In higher education, it may be that the professional generalist is being superseded by the concept of the project manager, who carries generic experience from project to project, as in the case of the enterprise manager at NewU. The professional specialist, likewise, might be seen as a knowledge manager who interprets a discrete body of knowledge to construct unique institutional intelligence, as described by Little, Quintas and Ray (2002). Furthermore, there is evidence of the emergence of a further category of 'professional manager' (as in the case of the planning manager at CampusU and the student services manager at NewU). It may be, therefore, that individuals will increasingly see themselves as building such identities, rather than as being associated with a particular function or institution.

All these changes will have implications for recruitment strategies, for rewards and incentives, and for staff development. As in the case of academic staff (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling, 2007), it may be that professional staff are likely increasingly to

favour individualised opportunities for mentoring and sabbatical leave. There are, therefore, issues about how such opportunities might be integrated with formal programmes, how professional staff development relates to the opportunities available for academic staff, and about ways in which the two might be integrated.

There is also a growing trend for practitioners to publish work arising from dedicated master's and doctoral programmes in higher education management, thus contributing to academic knowledge in the field, and relating theory to practice. They are, therefore, creating not only institutional knowledge, but also knowledge that is more widely generalisable about their own practice, thereby contributing to a professional research base. This self-generated, in-practice knowledge is revised and updated on an ongoing basis, supplementing, if not replacing, the fixed bodies of knowledge as described by Allen and Newcomb (1999) and Skinner (2001). A case could be made for professional managers who contribute in this way (and also, for instance, who assist with professional development of their peers through mentoring and in-house or regional programmes) to achieve wider recognition for this type of activity in relation to promotion or career opportunities.

The introduction of a common National Framework Agreement for staff in UK higher education in 2006, permitting institutions to design and customise their employment structures around a single pay spine, could, on the one hand, give greater latitude for rewarding individuals who extend their roles outwith the precise parameters of a job description (Strike, 2005). On the other hand, the emphasis of the Framework on a job evaluation process may, at the same time, restrict the ability of

individuals to interpret and develop their roles. Institutions will be obliged to address such issues if they wish to encourage more extended ways of working, as exemplified by those categorised as *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* in the study.

While the study contributes to a picture of a diversifying higher education workforce in the UK, therefore, it could be usefully extended by:

- Undertaking a longitudinal study of career pathways.
- Broadening the participant base to include professional staff specifically recruited to mixed roles.
- A more comprehensive study of the interface between professional and academic managers generally, and in particular, those with contiguous or overlapping briefs, such as directors of finance or human resources and pro-vice-chancellors with a resources portfolio.
- Drawing comparisons between the changing identities of professional and academic managers (it could be, for instance, that the categories of *bounded*, *cross-boundary* and *unbounded professionals* may be applied also to academic staff).
- Developing a more detailed understanding of how project teams work, particularly when they comprise a mix of professional staff, academic managers and mainstream academic staff. This might include, for instance, where responsibility lies for decision-making, relationships between different members of the team, and allocation of work streams.
- A wider review of the location of institutional power and authority, and possible shifts, updating Moodie and Eustace's 1974 study of *Power and*

Authority in British Universities, for instance in relation to decisions involving risk.

- Reviewing the implications of movement by professional staff in and out of the sector.
- Reviewing the appropriateness of development opportunities that are available.
- Including international comparisons of the identities of professional staff in higher education.
- Consideration of professional locations and career paths in relation to gender.

The study has illustrated the dissolution of a clearly defined, and widely understood, caucus of staff, as described by Fielden and Lockwood (1973) and Moodie and Eustace (1974), and an associated diversification of identities. As actors in and agents of higher education institutions, professional staff have moved from a situation where they are predominantly acting out pre-determined roles, to being part of the stimulus that enables institutions to “sustain change” as they “lean towards the future” (Clark, 2004: 92-93). It would appear, therefore, that Warner and Palfreyman (1996: 3) are correct in that the “administration or management?” debate is not a productive one, not only because, as they say, it cannot be resolved, but also because it does not take account of the emergence of new identities and legitimacies.

It is also suggested that, as institutional and environmental complexity increases, the professional capital (Putnam, 2000; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) offered by professional staff is likely to grow. In the university of the future, they will not only

contribute to the building of institutional capacity internally, but also assist institutions to interact with their external constituencies and to consider ways in which they might develop for the future. In an increasingly open environment, this is likely to involve operating in conditions characterised by uncertainty, disequilibrium, and even dis-harmony (Giddens, 1990; Barnett, 2000a; Hassan, 2003).

Although the concepts of administration and management are likely to continue to co-exist in institutions, and professional staff to be associated with their practice, the expectations associated with the two concepts are also likely to be overlaid by ways of working associated with new forms of space, knowledges and relationships. Professional staff themselves have a part to play in raising awareness of their identities, by promoting their contribution to both academic and institutional agendas. Senior institutional managers, also, have a responsibility to acknowledge identity developments that are occurring, and to foster an environment in which professional staff can, to quote the planning manager at CampusU, “feel safe in [offering opinions]... [and] to feel that is allowable and expected of them”.

Not only have professional staff become more active in constructing their identities but, as they work across and beyond boundaries, they are obliged to re-negotiate the sources of their legitimacy. In turn, it may be that those institutions that are able to give recognition to more extended ways of working will be most likely to maximise the contribution of professional staff, and to achieve an effective accommodation with their current and future environments.

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APPENDIX 1

HESA definitions and data

The Higher Education Statistics Agency began to collect data for administrators and managers as well as for academic staff in 2003/04 (HESA, 2005). It bases its definitions on occupational codings devised by the University of Warwick on behalf of the Institute for Employment Research (Davies and Ellison, 2002). Their categories include “managers”, “non academic professionals”, “student welfare advisers and assistants; careers advisers; vocational training instructors; personnel and planning officers”, “artistic, media, public relations, marketing and sports instructors” and “library assistants, clerks and general administrative assistants”. Thus, professional managers and administrators were not separated out as a discrete category from other broad groupings.

The numbers in each of the above categories are as follows. The figures in brackets represent the percentage of the total higher education workforce represented by each category. Taken together, Categories 1, 3, 3B and 3C represent 15% of the total workforce. Academic professionals (Group 2A) represent 44.4%.

- Category 1: Managers (of all types) (3.4%). The study includes approximately 50% of this category, which would comprise approximately 1.7% of all higher education staff.
- Category 3: Non-academic professionals (8.0%). The study includes approximately 50% of this category, which would comprise approximately 4% of higher education staff.

- Category 3B: Student welfare workers, careers advisers, vocational training instructors, personnel and planning officers (2.2%). The study includes student welfare workers, personnel and planning officers from this group, which would comprise approximately 1.0% of higher education staff.
- Category 3C: artistic, media, public relations, marketing and sports instruction occupations (1.4%). The study includes public relations and marketing staff from this group, which would comprise approximately 0.7% of higher education staff (HESA, 2005: 7).

A rough estimate of the group targeted by the study is arrived at by extrapolating the approximate proportion of professional managers contained in HESA Categories 1, 3, 3B and 3C. Such a calculation suggests that “professional managers” represent about 7.4% of the total workforce.

APPENDIX 2

Definitions from the HESDA Report

The HESDA Report used the Standard Occupational Classifications (Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), 1990) to define job categories in universities. Those relevant to the present study include:

Occupational Grouping	Examples
1 Managers and administrators	124 Personnel, training and industrial relations managers 191 Registrars and administrators of educational establishments
2 Professional occupations	230 University and polytechnic teaching professionals 242 Solicitors 270 Librarians 293 Social workers, probation officers
3 Associate professional occupations	300 Laboratory technicians 340 Nurses 320 Computer analyst/programmer 391 Vocational and industrial trainers 392 Careers advisers and vocational guidance specialists

(HESDA, 2002: 75)

The HESDA report calculated that there were 38,000 staff in the “managers and administrators” category in higher education, and that this represented about 8% of the workforce. This corresponds to a rough estimate of 7-9%, calculated from figures in the Bett Report, and an estimate of 7.4% calculated from the 2003/04 HESA statistics.

APPENDIX 3**Definitions from the Bett Report**

The Bett Report grouped Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Staff (APTC) in the post-1992 sector as comprising 22.2% of the workforce. If one makes the assumption that in the post-1992 sector administrative staff comprise something between one third and one half of the APTC category, this would represent around 9% of the total workforce in the post-1992 sector. In the pre-1992 sector, the report calculates that Academic Related staff represent 6.9% of the total workforce. This suggests that “administrators and managers” in the combined sectors represent something between 7% and 9% of all staff in higher education.

APPENDIX 4

The Compton Report – Extrapolation of administrative staff percentages from *The Higher Education Workforce* (Institute for Employment Studies, 2001) and AUA Membership

The Compton study analysed the proportion of staff undertaking different fields of administrative work. “Registrars and senior administrators” were by far the largest category at 45%. When translated into broad-brush groupings the percentages are as shown in Figure 24. A further proxy for the variously defined administrative categories is membership of the Association of University Administrators (AUA) (around 4,500 staff), which was broken down as shown in Figure 25 in the end-of-membership-year survey conducted in August 1999 (AUA 2002). It is notable that the largest categories of members come from faculties or schools (42%) and central registry (20%). This reflects the fact that AUA membership is biased towards generalist staff, more of whom are in membership of the Association because professional specialists tend to belong to their own dedicated groupings and conferences.

Figure 24 - Administrative Staff Percentages: Compton Report 2001

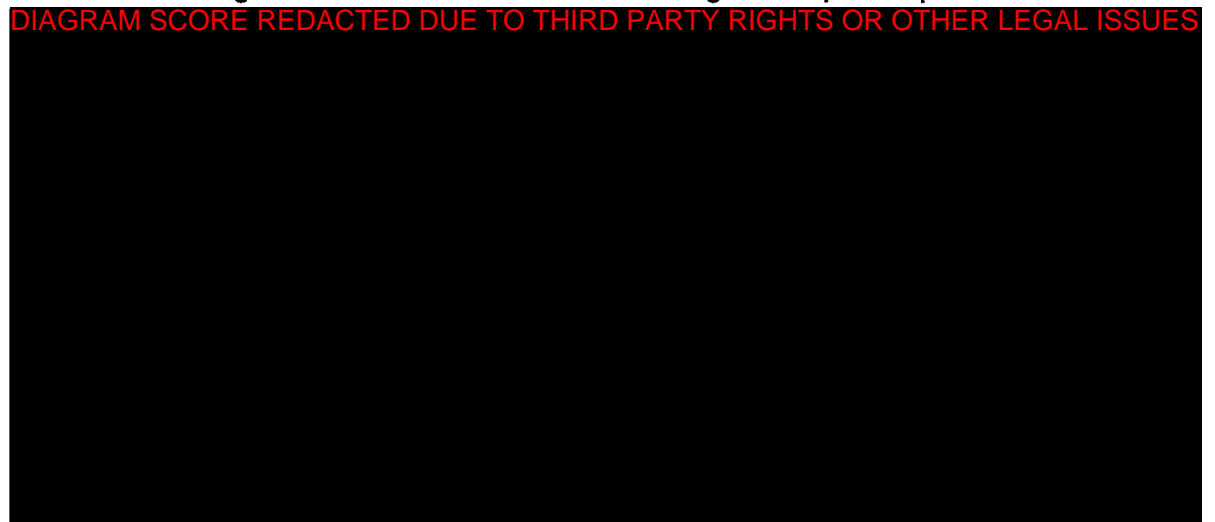
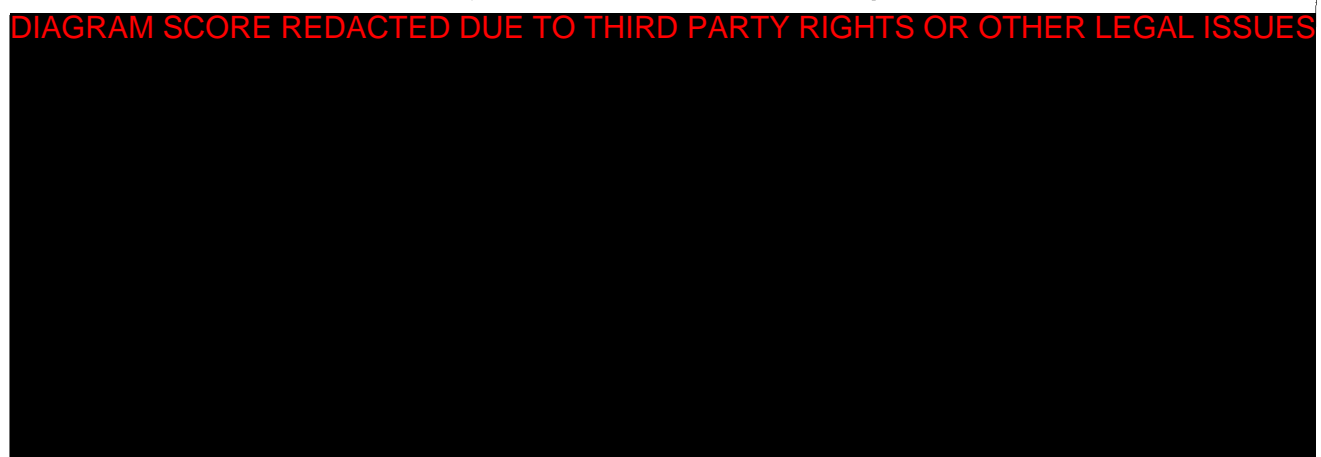


Figure 25 - Categories of staff in AUA membership 2002



APPENDIX 5

Letter to "Gatekeepers"

Dear

I mentioned when we met recently that I am undertaking part-time doctoral research at the University of London Institute of Education, on the professional identities of administrators and managers in UK higher education. My supervisor is Professor Ronald Barnett, with Professors Michael Shattock and Gareth Williams as co-supervisors. I have already interviewed a number of university Registrars, Secretaries and Vice-Chancellors to develop an overview, and am now embarking on the second part of the study which will involve interviewing professional administrators and managers at different stages of their careers. I am seeking to do this in three different types of institution (multi-Faculty, green field campus, and post-1992).

I am therefore writing to ask if you would be willing for me to use xxx as one of the sites. This would involve interviewing you and, say, three of your senior professional colleagues (for instance someone from Finance, HR, Student Services) and four middle managers such as Faculty or business managers. The interview would be semi-structured, around a topic guide, and last between 45 minutes and one hour. I should be happy to send the topic guide in advance if people would find that helpful. The aim is to try to build a picture of the distinguishing features of contemporary professional managers (as opposed to, say, academic managers, though of course their roles inter-digitate).

If you are agreeable in principle I should like to try to fix the interviews over a two or three day period. I appreciate that this would depend partly on people's availability, and I should of course be happy to arrange things directly with people if you were able to act as gatekeeper.

Although I am required for research purposes to make a tape recording of the interviews I undertake, transcripts will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and the identity of those interviewed, and their institutions, will remain anonymous both for the purposes of the thesis and any publications that arise out of it. I hope that the findings will be of value and interest to the higher education community generally, and I will provide respondents with copies of any published material.

I appreciate that you must receive a number of requests of this kind, but any assistance that you are able to give would be much appreciated.

APPENDIX 6

Letter to second- and third-tier participants in study

Dear

I understand from [name of gatekeeper] that you have kindly agreed to be interviewed in connection with my doctoral research into contemporary administrative and managerial identities in UK higher education, for which I am registered part-time at the University of London Institute of Education. My supervisor is Professor Ronald Barnett, with Professors Michael Shattock and Gareth Williams as co-supervisors.

Having interviewed a number of Registrars and Secretaries and Vice-Chancellors, I am now undertaking the second part of the study. This involves talking to both specialist and generalist administrators and managers at different stages of their careers, in three different types of institution (multi-Faculty, green field campus and post-1992). Although I am required for research purposes to make a tape recording of the interviews I undertake, transcripts will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and the identity of those interviewed, and their institutions, will remain anonymous both for the purposes of the thesis and any publications that arise out of it. I hope that the findings will be of value and interest to the higher education community generally, and I will provide respondents with copies of any published material.

In order to save time collecting factual data when we meet, I enclose a pro forma, which I should be grateful if you could complete and return to me, if possible ahead of our meeting. The semi-structured interview will last about 45-60 minutes. I will ask firstly about the development of your own career and professional identity, and secondly about your views on generic changes that have occurred over the period that you have been working in universities. The aim of this is to try to build a picture of the distinguishing features of contemporary 'administrative managers' (as opposed to, say, academic managers, although of course their work inter-digitates).

I look forward to meeting you on

APPENDIX 7

Project on Administrative Identities in UK Higher Education

Questionnaire for completion by interviewees

Institution:

Name of interviewee:

Note: This page to be removed when the questionnaire is anonymised for purposes of analysis

1. Anonymity Code: (for completion by CMW):

2. Sex: M/F

3. Generic title of current post:

eg Director of Finance, Assistant Registrar, Faculty/School Accountant

.....

4. Grade of post:

5. Current institutional location: (eg corporate centre, School, Faculty, Department):

.....

6. Reporting line: (eg Registrar/Secretary, Dean, Pro-Vice-Chancellor)

.....

7. Specific area of work (one sentence):

.....

.....

8. Number of years in current post:

9. Age band (please tick one):

50+	
40-49	
30-39	
20-29	

10. Qualifications (please tick appropriate boxes):

Bachelors degree	
Postgraduate diploma	
Masters/MBA degree	
Doctoral degree	
Professional Finance/Accountancy	
Professional Personnel/HR	
Professional Estates/Building	
Legal	
Company Secretary	

Other (please specify):

11. Number of years in university administration/management (please tick up to two boxes):

<u>Pre-1992 Sector</u>	<u>Post-1992 Sector</u>	<u>Other HE</u>	
30+	30+	30+	
20-29	20-29	20-29	
10-19	10-19	10-19	
5-9	5-9	5-9	
Up to 5	Up to 5	Up to 5	

12. Number of institutions worked in:

Pre-1992:

Post-1992:

Other HE

13. Number of years' experience outside higher education sector:

Public sector:

Private sector:

Please give brief description of type of non-higher education organisation(s) worked in:

.....

14. Professional development activities in last three years:

Study leading to qualification: Yes/No (if yes please specify)

.....

Non-qualificatory training (in-house or external) related to professional practice:
Yes/No (if yes please specify)

.....

Attending seminars/conferences: Yes/No

Mentoring: Yes/No

Presenting at seminars/conferences: Yes/No

Authoring of published papers/monographs: Yes/No

15. Professional reading:

Times Higher: Regular/Occasional

Professional journals (please specify):

..... Regular/Occasional

..... Regular/Occasional

..... Regular/Occasional

..... Regular/Occasional

Books related to professional practice: Regular/Occasional

16. Job description – if you are willing to let me see your job description, I should be grateful if you could enclose this when returning the questionnaire

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return to Celia Whitchurch c/o GKT School of Medicine, First Floor, Hodgkin Building, King's College London, Guy's Campus, London Bridge, London SE1 9RT or at celia.whitchurch@kcl.ac.uk.

APPENDIX 8

Topic guide for meetings with middle and senior managers

Preliminaries

- Trying to build a picture of composition of contemporary higher education administration and management in context of changes that have taken place in universities' operating environments
- Scope - inclusion of specialist professionals but not teaching and learning support staff as such
- Broad dimensions: administration/management; academics/managers; academic/professional managers; centre/academic heartland; strategy/operations; concept of "service"
- Information used solely for purposes of research
- Ask for job description/pro forma if not already submitted
- Any questions?

Autobiographical

- 1.How interviewee moved into university administration/management
- 2.Critical elements/turning points in career so far

Current role/identity

- 3.Balance of activity in current job in terms of eg
 - Administration – regulations, standards, maintenance, gate-keeping
 - Management – resources, people

- Professional services – applying specialist expertise; policy and development
- Anything else?

4. Do they see themselves primarily as an administrator, manager or professional?

5. What is their distinctive contribution/nature of influence?

6. Involvement in decision-making. Types of decisions

7. How much discretion/autonomy/choice

8. Exposure to risk and nature of risk

9. Degree of involvement in initiating change

10. Have they ever felt subject to role or identity conflict? In what way?

Interfaces

11. Key interfaces eg:

- a. Academic staff
- b. Other professional staff
- c. Students

12. Difference between their role and that of academic managers

13. Areas of overlap with other professional managers/academics/academic managers

14. With whom do they work most closely?

15. Whom do they regard as their peer group internally/reference group externally?

Self/institution

16. Belonging/allegiance – (institution, higher education system, profession, corporate centre, heartland, unit, team, line manager)

17. To what extent do they see the university as a community of scholars, a public service institution and/or a series of businesses? Has the balance changed? Is it likely to change in future?

18. How does consultation occur? How is consensus reached? Are there some areas that are more consensual than others?

19. How is trust built, particularly between academics and managers?

20. What do they think they are most valued for by a) line manager b) academic colleagues?

21. Do they see their future in universities?

22. Where do they see themselves going next in terms of type of job, location (public or private sector)?

23. Any other relevant issues?

Sector-wide issues

24. Are there any common threads between professional managers as a grouping, or are they just people who happen to work in similar environments on a variety of jobs?

25. Is there still a “service” element to what professional staff do?

26. Understandings around “administration” and “management” – are these terms still relevant?:

- Does management contain elements of administration and vice versa?
- How does university management/administration differ from a) other public sector b) private sector?
- Is there something distinctive about the practice of administration and management in universities?
- Differences between professional management and academic management

27. (For more senior administrators) Elements of continuity and change over last twenty years eg how decisions are made; how professional staff are involved in this
28. Does the “generalist” have a future?
29. Value of qualifications – generalist; specialist – what would they do if starting again?
30. Any other relevant issues?

Concluding remarks

- Thanks
- Any questions
- Assurance of confidentiality/anonymity
- Published material to be made available in due course

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